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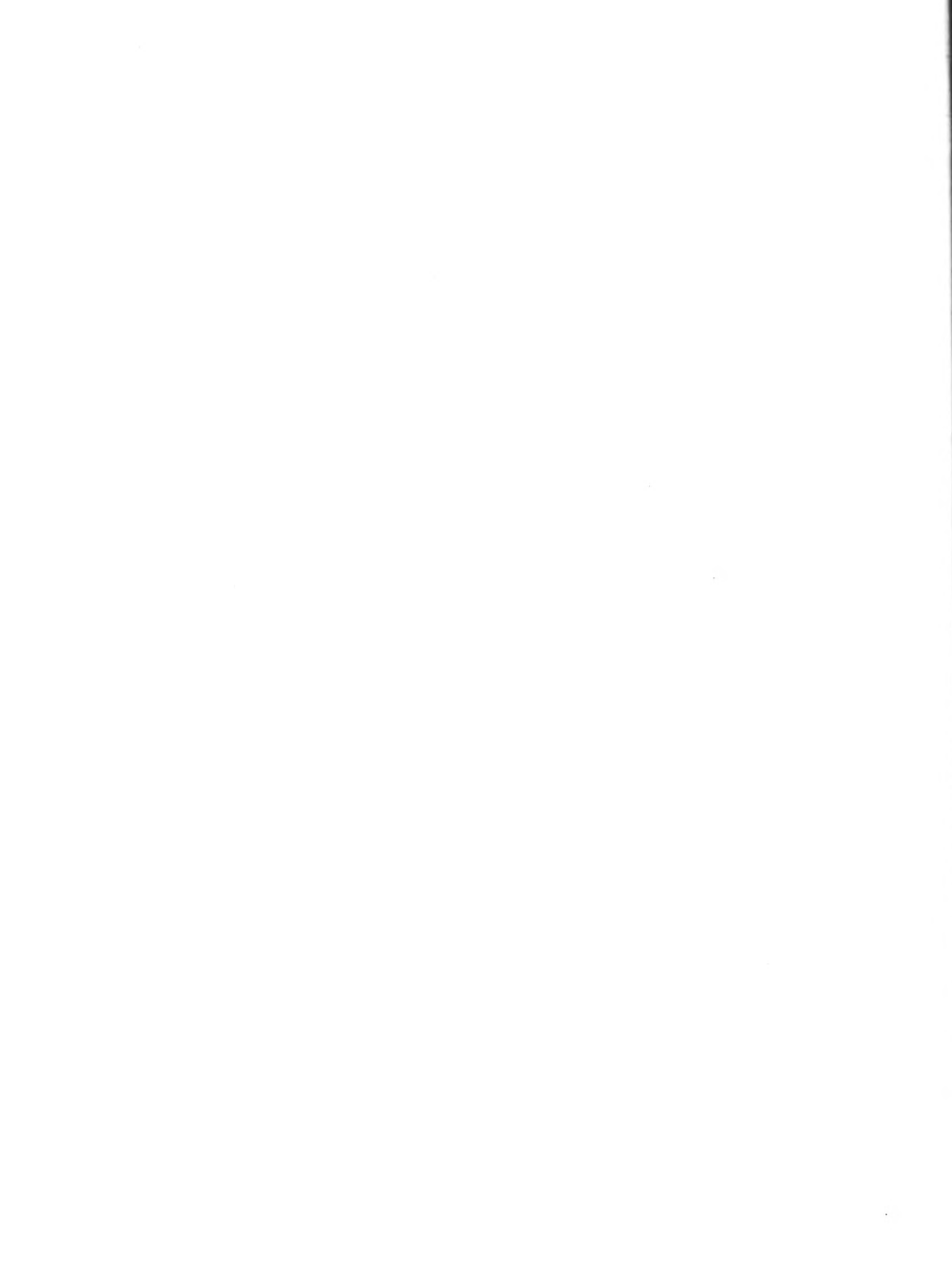
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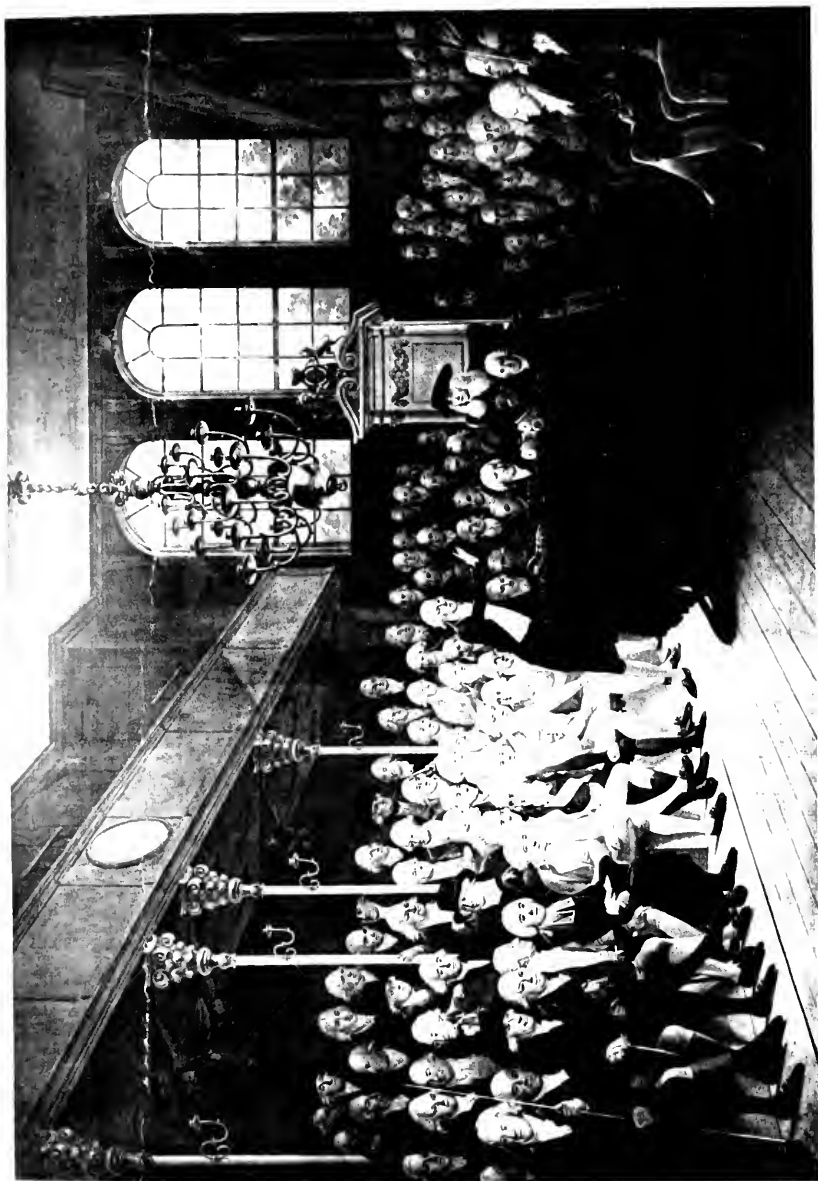


# PARLIAMENT

PAST AND PRESENT







INTERIOR OF THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS IN ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH 1703



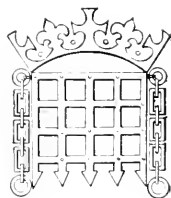
# PARLIAMENT

## PAST AND PRESENT

A POPULAR AND PICTURESQUE ACCOUNT OF A  
THOUSAND YEARS IN THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER,  
THE HOME OF THE MOTHER OF PARLIAMENTS

BY

ARNOLD WRIGHT AND PHILIP SMITH



WITH 643 ILLUSTRATIONS  
INCLUDING  
EIGHTEEN COLOURED PLATES AND A  
PHOTOGRAVURE PLATE

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# CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE	CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	1	XX. THE LIBRARY . . . . .	260
I. OLD-TIME PARLIAMENTS AND PARLIAMENT MEN . . . . .	9	XXI. BELOW STAIRS AT ST. STEPHEN'S . . . . .	265
II. MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S—THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	17	XXII. THE CLOCK TOWER AND BIG BEN . . . . .	275
III. MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S ( <i>continued</i> )—THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	25	XXIII. THE CRYPT CHAPEL AND CLOISTERS AND THE JEWELL TOWER . . . . .	285
IV. MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S ( <i>continued</i> )—THE COMMONWEALTH . . . . .	45	XXIV. ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL . . . . .	293
V. MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S ( <i>continued</i> )—THE RESTORATION AND THE REVOLUTION OF 1688 . . . . .	51	XXV. PARLIAMENT IN BEING—ROYAL SPEECHES . . . . .	297
VI. THE SPEAKER AS HOST—PARLIAMENTARY COSTUME . . . . .	57	XXVI. PARLIAMENT IN BEING—THE SPEAKER . . . . .	318
VII. SOCIAL ASPECTS OF PARLIAMENTARY LIFE—WINING AND DINING . . . . .	67	XXVII. SPEAKERS—FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS . . . . .	329
VIII. THE LOBBY . . . . .	77	XXVIII. PARLIAMENT IN BEING—THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AT WORK . . . . .	361
IX. LADIES AT THE HOUSE . . . . .	86	XXIX. CALLED TO THE BAR—PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE . . . . .	380
X. MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S ( <i>continued</i> )—THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	95	XXX. THE HOUSE AT PRAYERS . . . . .	396
XI. WESTMINSTER HALL: ITS HISTORY AND TRADITIONS . . . . .	133	XXXI. IN COMMITTEE . . . . .	406
XII. WESTMINSTER HALL: MEMORABLE TRIALS . . . . .	118	XXXII. LORD CHANCELLORS—FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS . . . . .	422
XIII. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PALACE BY FIRE . . . . .	161	XXXIII. THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTS . . . . .	459
XIV. CORONATION CEREMONIES AT THE PALACE . . . . .	173	XXXIV. " " ( <i>continued</i> ) . . . . .	480
XV. MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S ( <i>continued</i> )—THE NINETEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	210	XXXV. " " ( <i>concluded</i> ) . . . . .	501
XVI. THE PRESS GALLERY . . . . .	221	XXXVI. THE PRECINCTS OF THE PALACE . . . . .	535
XVII. THE DESIGN OF THE NEW PALACE . . . . .	231	XXXVII. THE MINISTERIAL ANNEXE OF THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER . . . . .	564
XVIII. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS . . . . .	237	APPENDIX:—	
XIX. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS . . . . .	251	Parliaments of England . . . . .	579
		" " Great Britain . . . . .	580
		" " the United Kingdom . . . . .	580
		" and Conventions of the Estates of Scotland . . . . .	580
		" in Ireland . . . . .	580
		Lord Chancellors and Keepers of the Great Seal . . . . .	581
		Speakers of the House of Commons . . . . .	583

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

### PHOTOGRAPHURE PLATE.

Interior of the old House of Commons in St. Stephen's Chapel, 1793 . . . . . *Frontispiece*

### COLOURED PLATES.

	Page		Page
Queen Elizabeth . . . . .	21	The Houses of Parliament, from Lambeth Palace . . . . .	297
William Cecil, Lord Burghley . . . . .	41	The Right Hon. William Court Gully, K.C. . . . .	333
Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke . . . . .	97	The Marquis of Salisbury, K.G. . . . .	377
Charles James Fox . . . . .	121	The Right Hon. Warren Hastings . . . . .	393
The Court of Chancery in the reign of George I. . . . .	137	Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon . . . . .	433
Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat . . . . .	161	Henry John Temple, third Viscount Palmerston, K.G. . . . .	465
A Committee of the House of Commons at the Fleet Prison, 1729 . . . . .	201	Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G. . . . .	491
The opening of Parliament by King Edward VII. . . . .	211	The Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone . . . . .	527
A yeoman of the Guard . . . . .	265	Downing Street . . . . .	569

## OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
New Palace Yard	1	From one House to another	66	William Rufus	136
Mercere (a medieval jaunting from St. Stephen's Chapel)	1	Wine cellars of the House of Commons	67	View of Westminster in 1526	137
Eusebe (a medieval jaunting from St. Stephen's Chapel)	1	The Valerian vat	68	Interior of Westminster Hall in the middle of the seventeenth century	137
The King's Chapel	2	Mr. John Bellamy	69	Westminster in the early part of the seventeenth century	136
The famous trial of Charles I. in Westminster Hall on 30 January, 1649	3	Two smoking in the Dining-Room	70	General view of Westminster Hall	137
The House of Commons in 1649	3	The House of Commons Dining-Room	71	Edward the Black Prince	138
The Royal banquet at the coronation of George IV.	5	The House of Commons Dining-Room	71	Henry III. and the barons	139
Sketch made by Hogarth at the trial of Lord Lovat in 1747	6	Minister's Table	72	Edward III.	140
Lord Brougham	6	The House of Lords Dining-Room	72	The Painted Chamber	141
The Crypt Chapel	7	Charles Dickens	73	The Commons entrance to Westminster Hall	142
Robert Peel	8	The Commons Irish whisky vat	74	The inauguration of the Right Hon. W. F. Gladstone in Westminster Hall	143
Lord Palmerston	8	The Lower Lobby	76	Samuel Pepys	144
Alfred submitting the law to the Witan	9	The Upper Lobby of the old House of Commons	77	The first day of terms, Westminster Hall	145
Edward I.	10	The orange girl	78	Peter the Great	146
Henry III. renewing Magna Charta	11	The Lobby, House of Commons	79	Old Palace Yard in the eighteenth century	147
Geoffrey Chaucer	12	Charles James Foxes Demosthenes	80	Sir John Squire, B.A.	148
Parliament of Edward I.	13	The assassination of the Right Hon. Spencer Perceval in the Lobby of the House of Commons on May 11th, 1812	81	The old landing place for the Palace of Westminster	149
A view of the Palace and Abbey in the seventeenth century	14	A tablet in St. Stephen's Hall	82	Sir Thomas More	150
Richard II. passing sentence of banishment on the Bishops of Hereford and Norfolk	15	The Speaker's procession	83	Henry Fisher, Bishop of Rochester	151
The Parliament in which Richard II.'s resignation was declared, and the Duke of Lancaster recognised as King	16	The door of the House of Commons by which the Legislative Chamber is entered from the Lobby	84	Henry VIII. in Westminster Hall	151
Sir Thos. as More	17	Corridor leading Commons Lobby to Conference-Room	85	"The true manner of the sitting of the Lords and Commons of both houses of Parliament upon the trial of Thomas Earl of Strabol, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland"	152
Cardinal Wolsey	18	A medieval episode in Parliament	86	The trial of Charles I. in Westminster Hall	153
An intrusion upon the Commons in the Chapter House	19	A lady petitioner at the Bar of the House in 1688	87	The death of Robert Shirley, Earl of Ferrers, at Tyburn, May 7th, 1709, for the murder of his steward, Mr. Johnson	161
Lastimer preaching before King Edward VI. in the "preaching-place" at Westminster	20	The Duchess of Gordon	88	The Duchess of Kingston	162
Sir Nicholas Bacon	21	The Duchess of Queensberry (as a milkmaid)	89	The trial of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall	163
Queen Elizabeth in Parliament	22	The old House of Commons	90	The burning of the Houses of Parliament, October 16th, 1834, as seen from the river	164
William Cecil, Lord Burghley	23	A scene outside the House of Lords in 1789	91	St. Stephen's Chapel, looking east, after the fire	165
Bird's-eye view of the Palace, taken from Agass's map of Westminster	24	Outside entrance to Ladies' Gallery of present House	92	The House of Lords and the House of Commons, as they were before the fire of October 16th, 1834	166
James I. and VI. of Scotland	25	Present House of Commons, showing ladies' grille above the Reporters' Gallery	93	Ruins of the House of Lords and the House of Commons after the fire	167
Sir Walter Raleigh	26	The Terrace & Afternoon tea	94	The Chapter Court, St. Stephen's Chapel, after the fire	168
Parliament in session in the reign of Jan. 4.	27	Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford	95	Dean Ireland	169
Westminster Hall and Abbey, from the village of Charing	28	Opening of Parliament by Queen Anne	96	Tablet in St. Stephen's Hall	170
Sir Edward Coke	29	Joseph Addison	97	Sir Charles Barry	171
Sir John Glauville	30	Sir Richard Steele	98	The new Houses of Parliament	172
John Selden	31	Articles of Union presented by Commissioners to Queen Anne in 1706	99	The new Palace at Westminster	173
The House of Lords in the time of Charles I.	32	Sir Robert Walpole	100	The coronation chair	174
The children of Charles I.	33	The House of Commons in Sir Robert Walpole's Administration	101	The coronation of Harold by the people	175
Charles I.	34	"The origin and essence of a grand exercise"	102	The coronation of Henry VI.	176
The Star Chamber	35	William Pitt, Earl of Bath	103	Richard II. in his coronation robes	177
A scene in the House of Lords	36	The guinea hall by Walpole to Putney in a hot bed in the House	104	The coronation procession of Edward VI. proceeding from the Tower to Westminster on February 19th, 1471	178
Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Stafford	37	George Bubb D'Angelo, Lord Melbourne	105	The coronation procession of George III.	179
A memorable scene in the House of Commons	38	Horace Walpole, fourth Earl of Oxford	106	Charles I. in his coronation robes	180
A view of the Palace and Abbey	39	Interior of the House of Lords in 1742	107	The coronation of Charles II. in Westminster Abbey	181
John Hampden	40	The Duke of Newcastle and Lord Holland	108	The Champion performing the ceremony of the challenge in Westminster Hall at the coronation of James II.	182
William Lenthall	41	The House of Commons in the eighteenth century	109	The coronation ceremony in Westminster Hall—James II.	183
A famous scene in the House of Commons	42	Thomas Pelham Holles, Duke of Newcastle, K.G.	110	Herb youth in the coronation procession of James II.	184
The train-bands leaving London	43	William Pitt, first Earl of Chatham	111	The coronation procession of George III.	185
The defence of Basing House	44	Richard Grenville, Earl Temple, K.G.	112	Triumphal arch erected in Westminster Hall for the coronation of George IV.	186
The Great Seal of the Commonwealth	45	The Right Hon. William G. Hamilton	113	The coronation of James III.	187
Oliver Cromwell	46	Charles Townshend, Lord Chatham's Chancellor of the Exchequer	114	The Court of Claims	188
The expulsion of members from the House of Commons by Cromwell on April 20th, 1653	47	A section of the wonderful tapestry hangings which adorned the walls of the old House of Lords	115	Procession of the regalia at the coronation of George IV.	189
Queen Henrietta Maria	48	Charles Lennox, third Duke of Richmond	116	George IV. at his coronation robes	190
"This House is to let"	49	The fatal seizure of the Earl of Chatham in the House of Lords on April 7th, 1752	117	The coronation of George IV. in Westminster Abbey	191
General Monk declared for a free Parliament	50	Entrance to the old House of Lords in the eighteenth century	118		
Bulwer-Lytton	51	Lord North afterwards second Earl of Guildford	119		
Andrew Marvell	52	John Wilkes	120		
George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham	53	"The complete vermin catcher"	121		
The attack on Sir John Coventry	54	Colonel Barrington	122		
Sir John Coventry	55	Burke's "danger speech"	123		
Parliament offering the Crown to William and Mary	56	Richard Bunsell Sheridan	124		
Sir John Trevor	57	Interior of the House of Commons in 1742	125		
The State bed in the Speaker's house	58	The Right Hon. Edmund Burke	126		
Speaker Addington of 1801-1804	59	Charles James Fox as a young man	127		
The Speaker's State coach	60	Charles James Fox	128		
The Speaker's Library	61	View of Westminster	129		
The Right Hon. William Gait Gully	62	The Right Hon. Arthur O'Shaughnessy	130		
Mrs. Gully in her bonnet, with her private secretary	63	The Right Hon. William Pitt	131		
Mr. Edward Gully, the Speaker's secretary	64	Statue of W. Pitt at the entrance to St. Stephen's Hall	132		
The Speaker's Dining-Room	65	Statue of C. J. Fox at the entrance to St. Stephen's Hall	133		
The Dining-Room in the Speaker's house	66				
Eliza, the mistress	67				

# List of Illustrations

vii

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
The crown of George IV.	192	Part of the cloister of St. Stephen's Chapel	155	The opening of King Edward's first Parliament	215
The coronation procession of George IV. from the Abbey to Westminster Hall.	193	Newspaper room, House of Commons	206	King Edward going to open his last Parliament	216
Miss Follies	194	Members' smoking-room, House of Commons	257	King Edward about to read his speech in the House of Lords	217
Queen Caroline	195	Grand staircase, House of Commons	258	William of Wykeham	218
The coronation banquet of George IV. in Westminster Hall.	195	"No. 1" Division Lobby, House of Commons	259	Sir John Lubbock	219
The altar used by Queen Victoria at her coronation	196	The Library (map-room), House of Commons	260	Sir Harbottle Grimston, Bart.	220
The coronation of Queen Victoria in Westminster Abbey	197	The Library, House of Commons	261	The Right Hon. Arthur Wellesley	221
Queen Victoria's coronation tunic and stole	198	Joseph House	262	The Speaker's House, River Front	222
The scope of imperial mantle worn by Queen Victoria at her coronation	199	Sir Thomas Erskine May, K.C.B. (Lord Chancellor)	262	The Light Hon. Charles Abbot, first Lord Falklands	223
The Right Hon. George Canning	200	The Library, House of Commons	263	The Right Hon. James Abercromby	224
A caricature by Gillray of Sheridan	202	The old key: A relic of the Gunpowder Plot	264	The Speaker's House	225
The Duke of Portland	202	The manuscript journals	264	"A jutting compliment"	226
Canning	202	The gunpowder conspirators	265	St. Stephen's Chapel and the Speaker's House	227
Lord Brougham	203	Engravings by George Cruikshank	265	"Caught napping"	228
The Rev. Sydney Smith	204	Facsimile of the plan of Lord Montagu's Anarch of the cellar under the old House of Lords in which the gunpowder was placed by Guy Fawkes and his brother conspirators	268	Cardinal Wolsey	229
"A box of useful knowledge"	205	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Richard Hill	230
The Right Hon. George Canning	205	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Sir Christopher Wray	231
The Magazine of Londonbury, better known as Lord Castlereagh	206	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Mural paintings in St. Stephen's Chapel - Henry VIII.	232
The House of Lords as fitted up in 1835 after the fire	207	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	St. Stephen's Chapel	233
The House of Commons as fitted up in 1855 after the fire	207	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Sir Robert Hall	235
Viscount Palmerston	208	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Speaker's Courtyard, from the south-west	236
Sir Robert Peel	209	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Procession of the Lords and Commons from Westminster to St. Paul's	237
The Duke of Wellington	210	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Speaker's Courtyard, from the south-east	238
Lord Eldon	210	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Sir Edward Coke	239
William Wilberforce	211	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Speaker William Lenthall	240
Queen Caroline	212	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Lenthall being carried back to the Chair by Presbyterian apprentices	241
Lord Erskine	212	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Entrance from New Palace Yard to the Speaker's Courtyard in the old Palace	242
The trial of Queen Caroline in the old House of Peers	213	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Speaker James Ross	243
Earl Grey	213	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Duke of Argyll	244
Queen Caroline returning from the House of Lords after her trial	215	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	George Monk, Duke of Albemarle	245
"The House won't keep her hours"	216	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Parliamentary buildings and Speaker's House	246
The carrying of the second reading of the first Reform Bill in the House of Commons	217	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Sir Edward Seymour	247
"Bringing up on bill"	218	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Speaker Charles Welford Cornwallwall	248
The Reform Bill of 1832 receiving the Royal assent in the House of Lords	219	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	249
George IV.	220	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Watergate, New Palace Yard	250
Head of a newspaper of the seventeenth century	221	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	William Wyndham, 1st. Baron Grenville	251, 252
Edward Cave	222	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Charles Manners Sutton, Viscount Canterbury	253
Dr. Johnson	223	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Charles Shaw-Lefevre, Viscount Eversley	254
William Woodfall	224	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	John Evelyn Denison, Viscount Ossington	255, 256
Daniel O'Connell	225	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Right Hon. Arthur W. Peel, Lord Peel	257, 258
Mr. Justin McCarthy	226	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Henry Bonville Brand, Viscount Hampden	259
The Press Gallery of the House of Commons	227	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Houses of Parliament, as seen from the Victoria Tower	260
Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., M.P.	228	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Speaker's Outside, House of Commons	261
The Press Gallery of the House of Lords	229	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The House is constituted	262
Mr. H. W. Llewellyn	230	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Induction of the Speaker-Elect	263
The House of Commons	231	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	St. Margaret's Church, Westminster	264
The Victoria Tower, from the garden	232	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Swearing in members	265
The House of Parliament, from Lambeth Bridge	233	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Lower smoking-room, House of Commons	266
The base of the Victoria Tower	234	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Lower waiting-hall, House of Commons	267
The Houses of Parliament, from Parliament Square	235	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Making a House	268
The Victoria Tower	236	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Presentation of sherriffs at Westminster	269
The entrance to the House of Lords	237	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Business indicator, smoking-room, House of Commons	270
"The Death of Nelson"	238	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	St. Stephen's Porch, Old Palace Yard	271
The King's Robing Room: Another view of the apartment	239	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Group of Vice-Chief Messengers	272
"The Meeting of Wellington and Blücher after Waterloo"	240	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Major and sherriff attending at the Bar	273
The House of Lords	241	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The "Aye" Division Lobby	274
The Peers' chamber: View from the wood-sack	242	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	A storage room, Vice Office	275
The Royal Gallery	243	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Passage of the second House Bill	276
The Royal Gallery as fitted up for the trial of Lord Russell	244	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Last Office, House of Commons	277
The Prince's Chamber	245	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Deputy Speaker's Office	278
The Bar of the House of Lords	246	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	"Doxham": A caricature	279
Fresco in the Prince's Robing-room: "The Judgment of Daniel"	247	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	John Nelson	280
Frescoes over the Stungers' Gallery in the House of Lords	248	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Speaker reprimanding an offender	281
Fireplace in the Prince's Chamber	249	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	David Jenkins	282
The Central Hall, showing the last statue of Mr. Gladstone	250	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons at work in the City	283
St. Stephen's Hall	251	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Commons Corridor	284
Statue of Sir Charles Barry	252	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Samuel Pepys	285
Fresco in the Commons corridor: "The Last Sleep of Agincourt"	253	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Titus Oates	286
Bust of Lord Randolph Churchill	254	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Colonel Waule	287
Mr. Henry B. Esling, C.V.O.	255	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Mrs. Clarke at the Bar	289
The Legislative Chamber, House of Commons	256	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Mrs. Clarke	290
The Speaker's seat, House of Commons	257	The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Right Hon. Spencer Perceval	291
		The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Sir Francis Baring	292
		The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The Bar of the House of Commons	293
		The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	The editor and publisher of the <i>Globe</i> at the Bar	295
		The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	St. Margaret's Church, Westminster	296
		The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Porch of St. Margaret's Church, Westminster	297
		The Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville	269	Mary Queen of Scots	298

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
Westminster Abbey . . . . .	299	The Duke of Wellington, K.G. . . . .	461	The Right Hon. Spencer C. Cavendish, eighth Duke of Devonshire, K.G. . . . .	529
Sir Benjamin in Babylon . . . . .	400	Edward Stanley, fourteenth Earl of Derby . . . . .	465	The Right Hon. Herbert B. Asquith . . . . .	530
Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's Church . . . . .	401	Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G. . . . .	467, 473, 490	The Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, K.C.B. . . . .	531
The Right Hon. Thomas Townshend, Interior of St. Margaret's Church . . . . .	402	Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury Fort . . . . .	469	The late Sir John Lubbock . . . . .	532
Statue of Oliver Cromwell . . . . .	404	Thomas Babington, Lord Macaulay . . . . .	470, 471	Mr. George Wyndham, M.P. . . . .	532
The Ven. Archbishop Wellesford . . . . .	405	Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd . . . . .	472	Archibald Philip Primrose, fifth Earl of Rosebery, K.G.B. . . . .	535
Committee Room No. 15 . . . . .	406	Sir Robert Peel, Bart. . . . .	473	The Grand Staircase, House of Lords . . . . .	534
Capetery in the Painted Chamber . . . . .	407, 408	The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone . . . . .	474, 475, 523	Old Palace Yard in the eighteenth century . . . . .	535
An interior view, showing the ancient tapestry, of the Painted Chamber . . . . .	409	Henry John Temple, third Viscount Palmerston, K.G. . . . .	475	Buildings on the eastern side of New Palace Yard . . . . .	536
Dr. Snowell . . . . .	410	George Hamilton Gordon, fourth Earl of Aberdeen, K.G. . . . .	476	The Old-aid, Westminster . . . . .	536
James, first Earl Stanhope . . . . .	411	Disraeli's first speech in the House of Commons . . . . .	477	William Froude . . . . .	538
The Duke of Wharfedale . . . . .	412	The opening of Parliament by Queen Victoria in 1847 . . . . .	478	Sir Walter Raleigh . . . . .	539
The South Sea Bubble . . . . .	413	Richard Cobden . . . . .	479	William Lamb, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1690 . . . . .	540
Charles, Earl of Sunderland . . . . .	414	The Right Hon. John Brough . . . . .	481	The famous Georgian, Duchess of Devonshire . . . . .	541
Thomas Brough . . . . .	415	The Right Hon. John Brough . . . . .	482	The Blue Boats' head Inn, King Street, Westminster . . . . .	542
General Oglethorpe . . . . .	416	The Right Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers . . . . .	483	The ancient precincts of the Palace of Westminster . . . . .	543
The Guards escorting the Government Lottery wheel to be drawn . . . . .	417	Lord George Bentinck . . . . .	484	Kings Street Gate, Westminster . . . . .	544
Lord Colborne . . . . .	418	The House of Commons in 1846 . . . . .	485	Old Star Chamber, Westminster . . . . .	545
Mr. Smith O'Brien, M.P., in custody . . . . .	419	Admiral Blake before Tientsin . . . . .	487	Tablet placed to mark the position of the old Star Chamber . . . . .	546
The Right Hon. Cecil J. Rhodes . . . . .	420	Henry Pelham, fourth Duke of Newcastle, K.G. . . . .	488	An engraving of the resolution conveying the plans of the House to the volunteer and yeomanry corps, 1803 . . . . .	546
The South African Committee . . . . .	421	The Right Hon. Earl Russell, K.G. . . . .	489	John Pym . . . . .	547
Archbishop Williams . . . . .	422	Sir John Lubbock, M.P. . . . .	490	Edmund Waller . . . . .	548
Thomas a Becket . . . . .	423	Earl Granville . . . . .	490	William Peters . . . . .	548
Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester . . . . .	424	The Houses of Parliament and Westminster Hall, as seen from Parliament Square . . . . .	491	Statue of Richard Cœur de Lion in Old Palace Yard . . . . .	549
York House . . . . .	425	The execution of Montrose . . . . .	492	Gilbert Burnett, Bishop of Salisbury . . . . .	550
Lord Keeper Coventry . . . . .	426	George Douglas Campbell, eighth Duke of Argyll . . . . .	493	Arcade connecting the House of Commons with the Westminster Station of the District Railway . . . . .	551
Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans . . . . .	427	John, first Lord Campbell . . . . .	495	St. Margaret's Church and the north transept of Westminster Abbey . . . . .	552
John Finch, Lord Lord of Fontenay . . . . .	427	The Marquis of Salisbury . . . . .	491, 517, 520	Entrance to the Chapter House, Westminster . . . . .	552
Edward, Baron Littleton of Mommsley . . . . .	429	Henry Howard Melville, fourth Earl of Carnarvon . . . . .	495	The Chapter House, Westminster . . . . .	553
Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon . . . . .	430	The House of Lords Library : The Queen's Room . . . . .	497	The Chapter House, Westminster . . . . .	554
The design of Lord Clarendon . . . . .	431	Robert Lowe, Viscount Stanhope . . . . .	498	Westminster Abbey, the Chapter House, etc. : A bird's-eye view . . . . .	555
Sir Orlando Bridgman . . . . .	432	William Pitt, Earl of Chatham . . . . .	500	The interior of the Chapter House, Westminster . . . . .	556
Anthony Ashley Cooper, first Earl of Shaftesbury . . . . .	433	East of Queen Victoria . . . . .	502	The Chapter House, Westminster, as it is imagined to-day . . . . .	557
Henrice Finch, Lord Nottingham . . . . .	433	Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P. . . . .	504	New Palace Yard . . . . .	558
Francis North, Lord Guilford . . . . .	434	The House of Commons : A division called "The House of Commons" . . . . .	505	The Chapter House, Westminster . . . . .	559
James H. in his Palace of Whitehall . . . . .	435	The Right Hon. W. E. Forster . . . . .	507	The Chapter House, Westminster, as it is imagined to-day . . . . .	557
George, first Lord Jeffreys . . . . .	436	Mr. Manchester, M. Bhowanagore, K.C.I.E. . . . .	508	New Palace Yard . . . . .	558
Jeffrey recaptured at the Red Cow Inn . . . . .	437	Charles Stewart Parnell . . . . .	509	The Chapter House, Westminster . . . . .	559
James H. dropping the Great Seal into the Thames . . . . .	438	The House of Lords during the Home Rule debate, September 20th, 1893 . . . . .	510	The Chapter House, Westminster . . . . .	560
John, Lord Somers . . . . .	439	Charles Bradlaugh . . . . .	510	Old Palace Yard . . . . .	561
Thomas Parker, Earl of Macclesfield . . . . .	440	Sir Ralph A. Gossett . . . . .	510	Westminster Abbey, from the Jewel Tower . . . . .	562
Lord Harcourt . . . . .	441	Charles Bradlaugh at the Bar . . . . .	511	Hoisting the Union Jack on the Victoria Tower . . . . .	563
Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester . . . . .	442	Lord Randolph Spencer Churchill . . . . .	512	Whitehall Gate . . . . .	564
Sir Peter King . . . . .	443	The Duke of Marlborough at Blenheim . . . . .	513	Whitehall . . . . .	565
Charles, Lord Talbot . . . . .	444	Mr. B. H. Brown in the House of Commons . . . . .	514	Benjamin Franklin . . . . .	566
Philip Yorke, first Earl of Hardwicke . . . . .	445	The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour . . . . .	515	Statue of the Foreign Office . . . . .	567
Robert, Lord Penley . . . . .	446	The Right Hon. W. H. Smith . . . . .	516	Mr. J. S. Sandars . . . . .	568
Charles Pratt, first Earl Camden . . . . .	447	Sir Stafford Henry Northcote, first Earl of Dalhousie . . . . .	519	Nelson and Wellington in the waiting room at the Colonial Office, September, 1805 . . . . .	569
Lord Thurlow . . . . .	448	Mr. Chamberlain's room at the House of Commons . . . . .	518	The Hon. Sir Schomburgk McMahon B. . . . .	570
John Scott, Earl of Eldon . . . . .	449	The Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Russell of Kilbuckin . . . . .	519	Lord Salisbury's room at the Foreign Office . . . . .	571
Thomas, first Baron Kilsake, K.T. . . . .	450	Sir Charles Frederick Dumas, M.P. . . . .	521	Lord Salisbury's room at the Privy Seal Office . . . . .	572
John Singleton Cooper, Baron Lyndhurst . . . . .	451, 466	Sir William Cairnes . . . . .	522, 523	Room at the Foreign Office where the Cabinet Councils are held . . . . .	573
Henry Peter, first Baron Brougham and Vaux . . . . .	452	Sir Ralph A. Gossett . . . . .	522	No. 16, Downing Street : The private study . . . . .	574
Sir Edward Bantershaw Sigden, Lord St. Leonard . . . . .	453	The Right Hon. Sir Henry H. Fowler . . . . .	524	No. 16, Downing Street : The Council Chamber . . . . .	575
Sir Frederic Thesiger, Lord Chelmsford . . . . .	454	Sir Benjamin Stone, M.P. . . . .	526	Captain F. D. Butler . . . . .	576
John, Lord Campbell . . . . .	455	"Out of the Wood" . . . . .	527	No. 16, Downing Street : The "Pitt" drawing-room . . . . .	577
Richard Bethell, Lord Westbury . . . . .	456	The Right Hon. William St. John F. B. . . . .	528		
The work . . . . .	456				
Sir Hugh Macdonald Cairns, Earl Cairns . . . . .	457				
Sir Ronald-Hugh, Earl of Selborne . . . . .	457				
Sir Hastings Giffard, Earl of Salisbury . . . . .	458				
Sir John Herschel, Lord Herschel . . . . .	459				
Lord John Russell . . . . .	460				
"We, the people of England" . . . . .	461				
Queen Victoria's first Council . . . . .	462				
William Lamb, second Viscount Melbourne . . . . .	463				
Charles, second Earl Grey . . . . .	463				

*See note*—In the note to the illustration on p. 78 "the eighteenth century" should be read for "the seventeenth." In line 8, p. 105, should read, "At various intervals, with various colours." In line 10, same page, should read, "A full portrait of p. 130 of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, should read, "Which opposition to the doctrine of Henry VIII. in the case of Arundel, and has refused to acknowledge the validity of Arundel's marriage, and his life." In line 4, p. 174, should read, "When Henry, son of Henry II., was crowned King in the lifetime of his father, etc." In line 5, p. 192, for "1761" read "1764." In same copy "children" instead of "grandchildren" is printed in the note to the illustration on p. 75, and "Westminster Hall" instead of "Westminster Abbey" in the note to the illustration on p. 105. In line 6, p. 275, delete "sixty feet higher than the top of the cross on the dome of St. Paul's." In line 30, p. 544, for "1st room" read "Littletown." In line 32, p. 545, for "1877" read "1875." In line 33, p. 546, for "John" read "James." In line 38, p. 567, "Wedderburn" should read "Wedderburn."



NEW PALACE YARD.

This is probably the oldest view extant. On the right is the old Clock Tower; in the centre is the conduit from which flowed wine on great occasions. The picture is from an original etching by Hollar.

## INTRODUCTORY.

THE ancient Palace of Westminster. What a host of memories the name awakens! How much it implies in the history of England and the building up of the British Empire! In mere point of antiquity there is nothing to compare with it amongst the great secular buildings of the Western world. It had been a Royal residence five hundred years before Catherine de Medicis laid the foundations of the Tuileries and the virile brain of Philip II. of Spain conceived the grandiose idea of the Escorial. Even the Vatican, venerable as are its traditions, did not come into existence until nearly two hundred years after Edward the Confessor first held his Court at Westminster, and it was almost double that period before Rome became the recognised residence of the Popes. By its side the marble glories of the ruined palaces of the Moguls in India and the sumptuous splendours of the Alhambra are but things of yesterday. Amid all its vicissitudes, dynastic and national, it has, with the brief interregnum of the Commonwealth, remained throughout the thousand years of its existence a Royal Palace. In a legislative sense its record is an equally remarkable one. Before the Golden Bull of Charles was issued, and while the Hanscatic League was yet in its infancy, it was the home of a Parliament promulgating laws and exercising a real if limited influence over the affairs of the nation. Its position amongst legislative centres is unique. The home of the Mother of Free Parliaments, it is to the Capitol at Washington as the adult to the little child. To write the history of the building fully is to write in broad outline the history of England. Every great national movement either had its origin there or was directed from its precincts: it has been associated with every great name in the history of the country, from the Venerable Bede to William Ewart Gladstone, whose picturesque lying in state



A medieval painting from St. Stephen's Chapel.



A medieval painting from St. Stephen's Chapel.



THE KING'S CHAMPION.

Who formerly at the Coronation Rampmet, rode into Westminster Hall and challenged to mortal combat any one denying the right of the King to the Crown.

the narrowest creed of Puritanism. Nowhere have so many great reputations been made in the field of statesmanship; in vain should we seek a quarter where so many mighty men have fallen. The whole atmosphere of the place is redolent of sensations which stir the pulse and kindle the imagination. To the British-born there is no spot on earth to equal it. It has for him all the sanctity of a Mecca and all the glowing interest of a Paris.

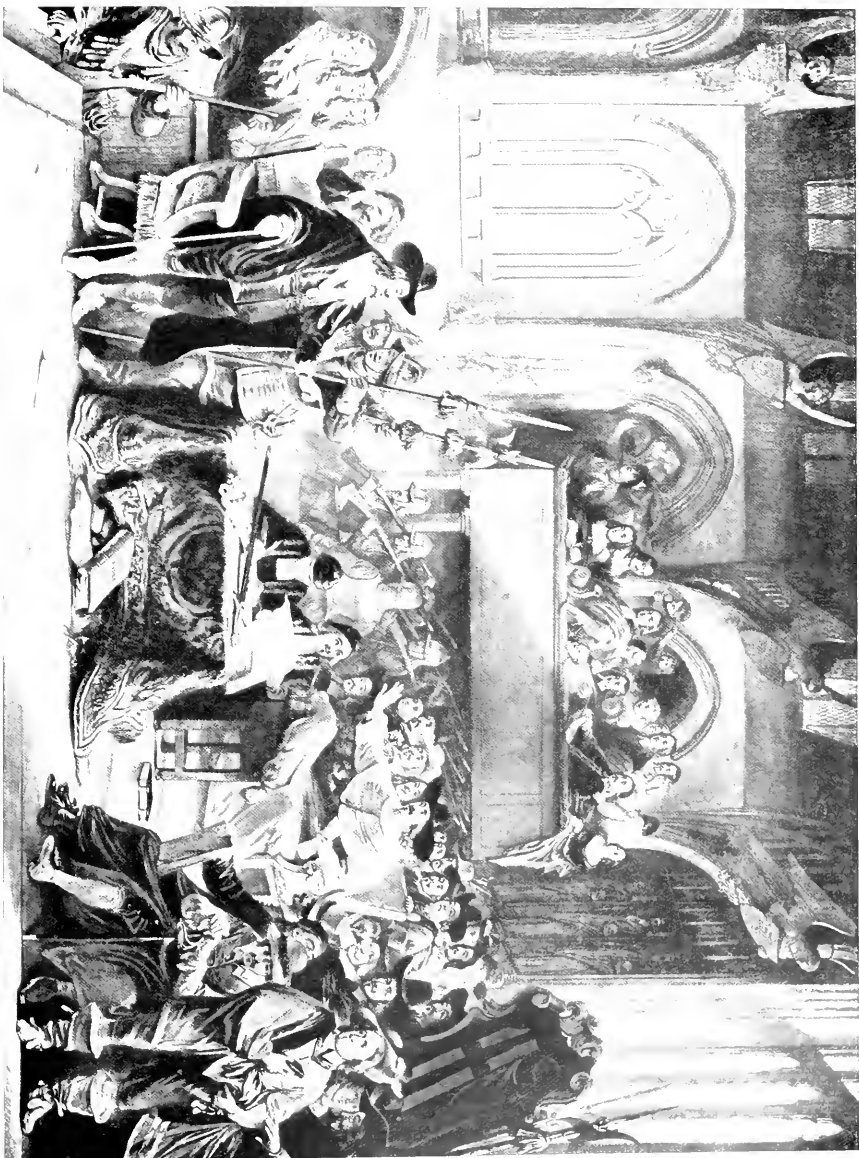
As becomes this cradle of an Imperial race, its origin is enshrouded in mystery. In the dim records of a far remote day we grope in vain for certain light. The fabled Isle of Avallon of Arthurian romance has scarcely attached to itself a greater measure of legendary lore than that to be found in the early history of this little spot of English ground washed by the rushing waters of the Thames. As Thorney Island—the Isle of Thorns—it emerges in faint and uncertain fashion in the quaint memorials of the old Saxon chroniclers as the home of a religious fraternity attracted thither rather by the forlornness of the situation than because of any advantage that attached to it by reason of its proximity to the homes and haunts of men. *In loco terribili* are words used to designate it in the oldest of the documents known to exist in reference to it, and we may imagine that the phrase was not misapplied. Dank and damp, the surface of the island only a few feet above the tideway, festering mud-banks fringing it on every side, it must have been a veritable Slough of Despond. But its very wretchedness was its strength. The holy fervour which induced men to establish themselves amongst the forlorn sedge-beds and thickets of the island conferred upon it a rare distinction in the eyes of the people of that superstitious age. They saw in this spot the scene of a glorious act of renunciation—the home of a body of men thrice

in the ancient hall of Rufus is still fresh in public memory.

Few of those who daily pass the stately modern building which rises in its Gothic magnificence from the river-side quite realise what a wonderful pedigree the place has; fewer still, perhaps, appreciate all that its history embodies. We are not a sentimental people, and, though we are moderately proud of our ancient institutions, we do not gush about

them. Yet there is scarcely a yard of land of the five acres which form what was the ancient Royal demesne that has not its story, which, when adequately told, thrills the least imaginative. Pageantry and tragedy have mingled their elements in its history—now brightening the halls of the Palace with music and gaiety, now darkening its precincts with the sombre shadows of conspiracy, or reddening its flags with the blood of traitors and martyrs. Kings have been born and have died there. The Palace has seen at once the most despotic display of Royal authority and the most arbitrary exercise of the popular will. It has been the scene of the domination of the most bigoted form of ecclesiasticism and





THE KING'S TRIAL OF CHARLES I. IN WESTMINSTER HALL, IN JANUARY, 1649.



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
MACE.

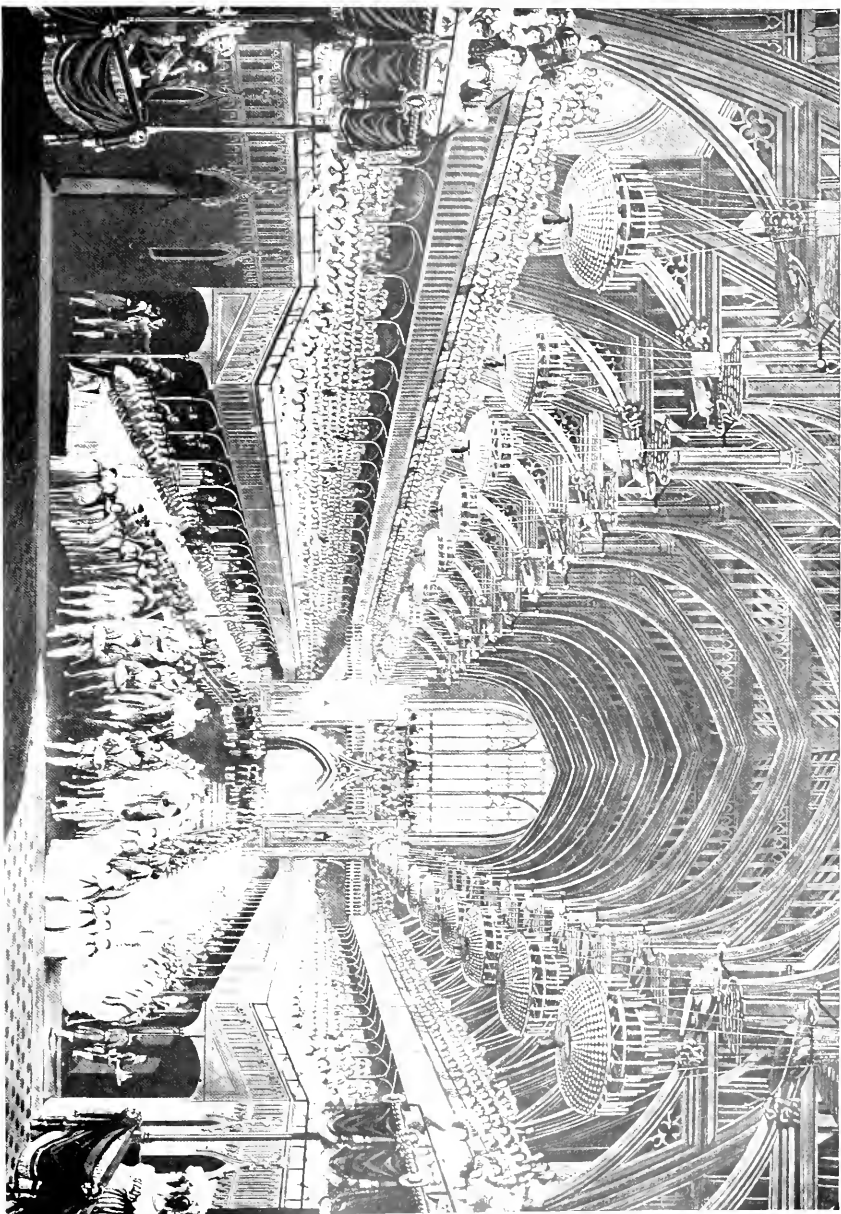
Not the "bauble" which Cromwell ordered to be removed, but a later work of the time of Charles II.

blessed of God. The tradition, once established, grew in strength with the lapse of time.

Eventually in the seventh century or thereabouts there arose out of the once deserted mud-flat a group of monastic buildings, rude and unassuming no doubt, but still sufficiently imposing to confer additional lustre upon the settlement. These were the germs of a settlement which, amid various vicissitudes, existed until the reign of Canute, when a new interest was conferred upon the site by the erection of a Royal residence there. The Danish King resided a good deal upon the island, and tradition fixes upon it as the scene of the famous incident of his ordering the tide to retreat. But intimate as Canute's connection with Westminster must have been, it is with the name of his successor, Edward the Confessor, that to all time the chief glory of creating this great centre of English life and tradition will be associated. The pious King, delicate in constitution, monkish in training and moods of thought, was drawn to this spot by a thousand ties of sentiment, and by the overmastering force of religious feeling. In his mind grew up gradually the conception of erecting on the site consecrated by the holy fervour of generations of religious men a noble minster which should be at once a monument to their zeal and an abiding testimony to his own faith. To the better superintend the work he established his home in close proximity to the site selected for the splendid edifice he had it in his mind to rear. What Edward's Palace was like is purely a matter for conjecture. Most probably it was an unassuming building in keeping with the character of the monarch and of the simple times in which he lived. But if architecturally insignificant, it has left its mark on the pages of history.

Frail in constitution, the Confessor only lived just long enough to witness the completion of the great work of his life. On Holy Innocents' Day (December 28th) in 1065 he set forth from the Palace to play a prominent part in the splendid ecclesiastical pageant which accompanied the consecration of the Abbey. The effort cost him his life. To quote the pathetic account which has come down to us through Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx, on returning from the ceremony "he laid his head down upon the couch, and began to be sorely pained. While he lay sick he forbade his attendants to weep; and seeing his Queen mourning and wailing, 'Mourn not, my daughter,' said he, 'I shall not die but live; and passing from the country of the dead, verily I hope to behold the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.' So, having commended himself wholly unto God, in the faith of Christ and the hope of His promise, old and full of days he departed from the world."

An unpretentious structure, of which the St. Edmund's or Painted Chamber was the main feature, situated in close proximity to the monastery and occupying a portion of what we now know as Old Palace Yard, was the heritage into which William the Conqueror came on his subjugation of the country. But, poor as it was architecturally, he was quick to recognise the value of the traditions which attached to it. Crowned in the Abbey, before the tomb of the Confessor, he made the Palace one of his Royal residences, and is even said to have enlarged and improved it. According to old



THE ROYAL BANQUET AT THE CORONATION OF GEORGE IV.

This view is taken at the moment when the second course is about to be served. It is at this point that the King's Champion throws down his gauntlet.

chroniclers, Elfric, Abbot of Peterborough, was tried before him there, and great councils were held there in the years 1074 and 1076. These were the beginnings of the judicial and legislative system which in the succeeding centuries was to see such wonderful fruition on the same spot.



This sketch was made by Hogarth at the famous trial of Lord Lovat in Westminster Hall in March, 1747.

It was, however, left to the Conqueror's son, he of the red hair, to give to the Palace of Westminster that imposing character which in later years was to attract to it the notice of men. By him was conceived the magnificent idea of Westminster Hall, a building which is still, after the lapse of eight centuries, without a formidable rival in its own line. That wonderful structure, in which grace and elegance are in singularly happy fashion combined with majesty and strength,

stamped emphatically this little plot of ground on the banks of the Thames as the home and centre of English authority. The common people recognised in it at once a symbol of power and a pledge of the enduring character of the order of things upon which it was based. William Rufus's successors accepted it as a convenient and stately instrument for the cultivation of the spirit of pageantry, which in those days was no unimportant factor in the maintenance of the popularity of ruling princes. Thus, as the years rolled by and one Norman King succeeded another upon the throne, the Palace of Westminster grew in size and importance; so much so, that in 1174 we find Fitzstephen speaking of it as "an incomparable structure." Its development, however, was gradual, like the Constitution which was being built up within its walls. The records are too scanty to enable us to say positively when the various parts of the Palace were constructed, but there is every reason to believe that nearly all the earlier Kings had a hand in the work. To Stephen is attributed the erection of the chapel, which was destined to be the home for centuries of the English Parliament.

His successor, Henry II., was responsible for the famous suite of apartments consisting of the Painted Chamber, the Prince's Chamber, and a third room known as the Parliament Chamber. The Third Henry also added largely to the Palace. Harsh tyrant though this monarch was, he was a great patron of the arts, and spent a not inappreciable portion of his resources on

the embellishment of the Royal residence. The artistic glories of the Painted Chamber were in large measure due to his initiative. These consisted of a series of paintings representing the battles of the Maccabees, the Seven Brethren, St. John habited as a pilgrim presenting a ring to Edward the Confessor, the canonisation of the King, and numerous black-letter inscriptions,



LORD BROUGHAM.

Chapel's miniature, showing Brougham on the wood-sack.

chiefly from Scripture. Admired in the Middle Ages as consummate specimens of the decorative art of the period, it was their fate in later times to be concealed from public view until an accident at the beginning of the last century revealed their existence. They were then carefully examined and copied, with the happy result that we have to-day exact reproductions of pictures which are amongst the earliest, if not absolutely the earliest, examples of oil painting executed in this country.

A great fire which devastated the Palace in the reign of Edward I. gave that King an opportunity, which he did not miss, of connecting his name with the building. Besides reconstructing damaged portions of the old structure, he rebuilt the chapel which was erected by Stephen. In Brayley and Britton's history of the Palace doubt is cast upon the



THE CRYPT CHAPEL.

One of the few remaining parts of the old Palace of Westminster. It was recently used at the baptism of one of the children of the Speaker.

existence of a first edifice, because the records dealing with the expenditure on the building of the chapel say nothing of the reconstruction, but, on the contrary, speak of foundation. But Walcott, a more modern authority, definitely asserts that a chapel was built by Stephen in 1141 for the use of the inhabitants of the Palace, and he cites facts to show that it was a not unimportant factor in the life of the Westminster of that day. At the hands of Edward II. the chapel benefited but little; but to his reign is attributed the erection of the Court of Exchequer, a famous apartment designed in the elegant style of the period, which stood to the north-east of Westminster Hall. It was left to Edward III. to give to St. Stephen's Chapel the ornate character which it bore until in a ruthless age it was diverted from its sacred purpose.

Important as Edward III.'s work at the Palace of Westminster was, it will not compare in point of interest with that of Richard II. This King undertook an elaborate rearrangement,



SIR ROBERT PEELE.

From a portrait by John Lunnell in the National Portrait Gallery.

amounting to a reconstruction, of Westminster Hall, and he also made extensive additions to the Royal apartments. The completion of this work saw the Palace of Westminster in its condition of greatest grandeur. Thereafter its history is little more than a record of misfortune and misdirected effort. In 1512, in the reign of Henry VIII., there was a great fire, which destroyed a very large portion of the Palace. This virtually sealed the fate of the building as a Royal resi-



LORD PALMERSTON.

An early portrait from the original in the National Portrait Gallery.

dence. Less than a hundred years later it was entirely given over to the Legislature and the Law Courts. Fire had then devastated much of the old Palace. Royal neglect had aggravated the condition of what was left of the place. The submissive House of Commons, which Queen Elizabeth so imperiously lectured, sat in the ancient Chapel of St. Stephen, sadly degenerated from its mediæval splendour, but still free from the defacements introduced by Wren. The "other House" found a home in the old Court of Requests, a building which occupied the site of the Lesser or White Hall of early Norman days. Hard by was the historic apartment known as the Painted Chamber, which tradition assigns as the death-place of Edward the Confessor. Dilapidated as it must have been, it probably still retained something of its old beauty, and when the two Houses met, as they were wont to do, in conference, they must have been confronted with the exquisite series of paintings which conferred upon the apartment its name. Westminster Hall wore then the same grand and impressive aspect which now characterises it, but the south end, instead of being occupied with a great flight of steps leading to spacious exits, was completely closed in. On its west side were groups of buildings, the most important of which were on the site of the old Court of Exchequer at the north-eastern end. On the opposite side of Palace Yard, about the Star Chamber, was another heterogeneous group of offices and residences, inhabited rather by Royal than Parliamentary officials. There was no sort of design or form about the Palace. It was a mere aggregation of buildings, a few of great architectural beauty and significance, but in the main of conspicuous meanness. So the Palace continued for another three centuries, until the great fire worked a beneficent change.

In the pages which follow, some of the remarkable incidents in the strange, eventful history of this fascinating spot from earliest times will be described, and the reader will be shown how has been built up there that splendid Constitution which has been an inspiration and an example to all the civilised nations of the world. Simultaneously, the attempt will be made to picture the life of this home of the Mother of Parliaments at different periods, and to bring out the interesting story of the growth of the majestic pile which has arisen on the ashes of the old Palace of Westminster.

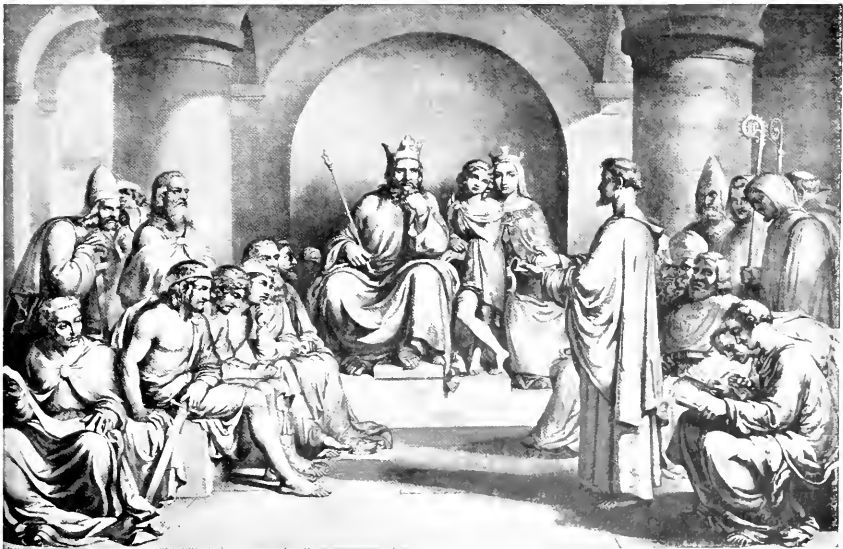
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## CHAPTER I.

### *OLD-TIME PARLIAMENTS AND PARLIAMENT MEN.*

PARLIAMENTARY institutions in one form or another have been in existence in this country from a very early period. They are, indeed, as Blackstone says, coeval with the kingdom itself. In Saxon times there was the Witenagemot, or assembly of the wise men of the kingdom, to represent the nation. In the early days of the Norman Conquest, National Councils, feudal gatherings over which the King presided as supreme overlord, dealt with State affairs. Parliaments, in the sense in which we are concerned with the term, however, did not appear on the national horizon until after the Great Charter had been extorted at the point of the sword from the unwilling John. They were, in the first instance, ambulatory in character, meeting at the convenience of the Court, now at Oxford, now Lincoln, or, again, at Windsor or St. Allans. An official return published in 1879 gives the year 1264-5 as that in which the first complete Parliament, embracing knights, citizens, and burgesses, met. This was summoned by Henry III. under the coercion of his powerful nobles, who, enraged at the long-continued misgovernment of the King, insisted upon his ratification of the rights conferred by the Charter, by the establishment of an assembly in which the national voice should be heard. Subsequent concessions made by the same monarch under duress laid the enduring foundations of that structure which is at once the envy and the admiration of the civilised world.



ALFRED SUBMITTING THE LAW TO THE WITAN.

This picture is one of a number designed to decorate the new Houses of Parliament, but was never used for that purpose.



EDWARD I.

Who was born in the Palace of Westminster, and who rebuilt St. Stephen's Chapel.

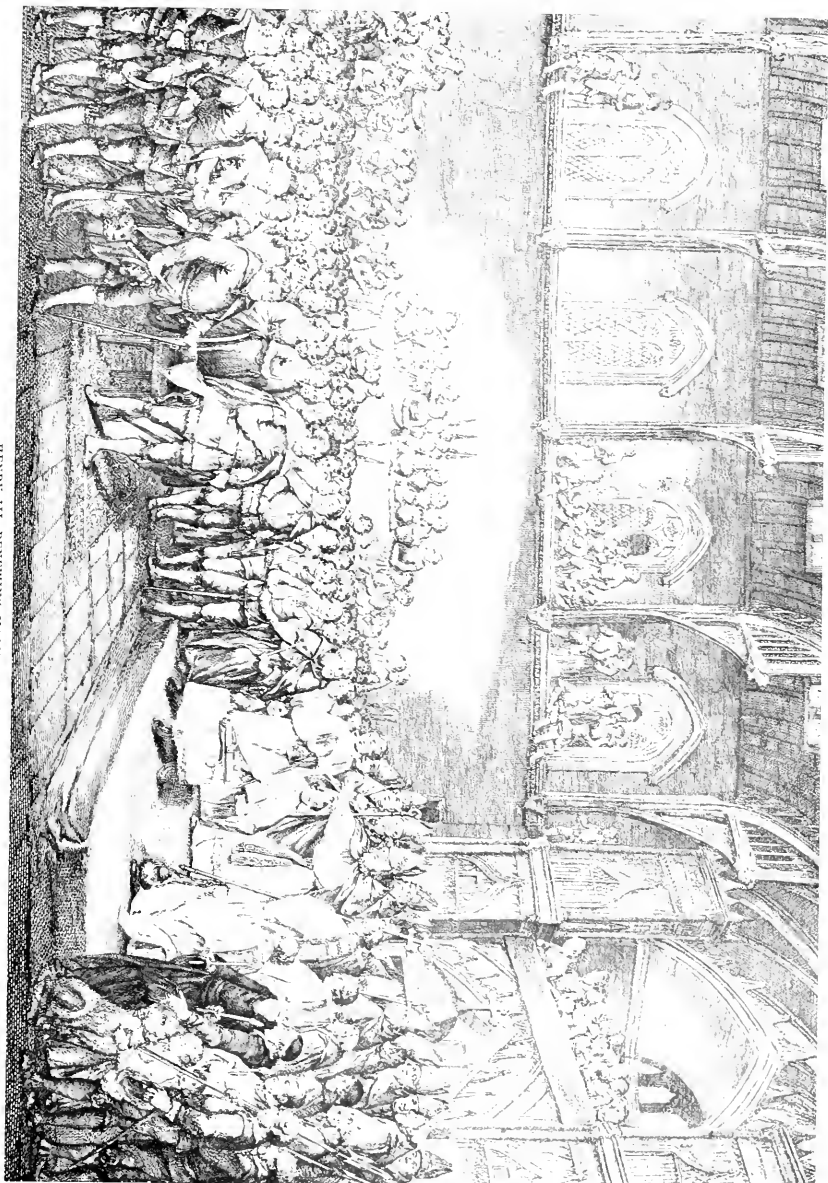
Behind these clerks is a cross bench, on which sit seven persons, covered, all with their faces towards the throne. All are robed, but the right-hand man appears to be seated higher than the rest, and has a chain around his neck. The explanation put forward by antiquaries is that this body is the "faithful Commons," and that the individual with the chain is the Speaker, "whose office at that time apparently was much the same as that of the now foreman of a jury—to collect their opinions individually, and to declare the result collectively, in the name of the whole body." To continue the description of the picture: each side of the room contains two benches at right angles with the throne; those on the left have two bishops and five peers on one seat. At the upper end of the front bench of these two, and on a separate seat which stands more to the front, sits the Prince, the son of King Edward, who was afterwards Edward II. The mitred abbots are accommodated on the other, or right, side of the House, and with them are placed six bishops. Various attendants are introduced, such as a nobleman, uncovered, bearing a sword, who stands behind Prince Edward, and a herald, uncovered, who figures near the attendant noble.

This, as the most authentic representation we have of a mediæval Parliament in being, has a remarkable interest for the constitutional student who is concerned in tracing the development of Parliamentary institutions. A somewhat similar illustration, it may be mentioned, figures in Fiddes' *Life of Wolsey*, showing the House of Lords as it was in the Cardinal's time. It is accompanied by an interesting explanation by Anstis, *Garter King at Arms*. This authority describes the cross bench containing the seven persons as a continuation of the barons' bench, the other part of it being close to the side wall of the House and behind the earls' bench. The man with a chain round his neck is, in his opinion, not the Speaker, but the Prior of St. John of Jerusalem. The Commons in this row are represented as standing at the Bar, and not, as in the earlier picture, as an integral part of the House.

Strange as it may seem in our modern eyes, women were an essential part of these early deliberative assemblies. We find, for example, that in the reign of Edward I. the Abbesses of Shaftesbury, Berking, St. Mary of Winchester, and of Wilton were summoned to

Meeting in Westminster Hall, or in some convenient chamber of the Palace, both branches of the earliest Parliaments sat together and deliberated in common. There is a quaint picture in existence, unquestionably the earliest pictorial representation of Parliament, which shows a sitting of the estates of the realm in the reign of Edward I. The work is a copy of an ancient drawing formerly in the College of Arms, London, and about the beginning of the last century in the possession of the Earl of Buchan. It represents, as explained in Smith's "*Westminster*," Edward I. sitting on the throne, with Alexander, King of Scotland, on his right on a lower seat, and Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, on his left. Beyond King Alexander, on a lower seat, is the Archbishop of Canterbury, and below Llewellyn sits the Archbishop of York. A woolsock figures prominently in the centre of the picture, and on it, in front of the throne, are four persons, who are easily distinguishable as the Chancellor, the two Chief Justices, and the Baron of the Exchequer. Two other woolsocks are placed at right angles with the former, and on each of them sit four persons, the whole no doubt composing the Judicial Bench. Behind these persons, and with their faces towards the throne, are two individuals, apparently clerks, standing uncovered, with something like documents in their hands.





JESSEY III. RENEWING MAGNA CHARTA.

The great historic scene in Westminster Hall in 1225, at which the King took a solemn oath to keep inviolate the articles of the Charter on pain of excommunication.

Westminster. Again, in the reign of Edward III. a number of ladies of high birth, including Mary, Countess of Norfolk, Alienor, Countess of Ormond, Anne Despencer, Countess of Pembroke, and Matilda, Countess of Oxford, were required by writ to give their attendance in the National Council Chamber. It is possible that the summoning in most cases was a mere matter of form. At all events there is evidence that a custom existed of allowing peeresses to be represented by proxy, and that this continued until as late as the time of Henry VIII. In that monarch's reign a suit was brought by a Mr. Wymbish, who had married Baroness de Talboys, to secure recognition of his right to sit in the House of Lords on behalf of his wife. His claim was rejected on the ground that as he had no children there could be no right of representation. After this the custom of female representation by proxy fell into disuse, and when Elizabeth mounted the throne it seems to have disappeared altogether.

As far as the general representation in these earlier Parliaments is concerned, it does not appear to have been of a particularly inspiring kind. For many years the popular delegate was a humble individual admitted on sufferance to the company of his betters to aid, in spasmodic and ill-defined fashion, in ministering to the material needs of his sovereign. A knight of the shire, with local propertied interests demanding his attention, or a burgess,

with claims of an even more urgent character upon his time, he went unwillingly to Westminster. In those days the roads were bad and dangerous to travel, and there was little in town life to compensate for the perils and expense of the journey, which was in some cases protracted to weeks.

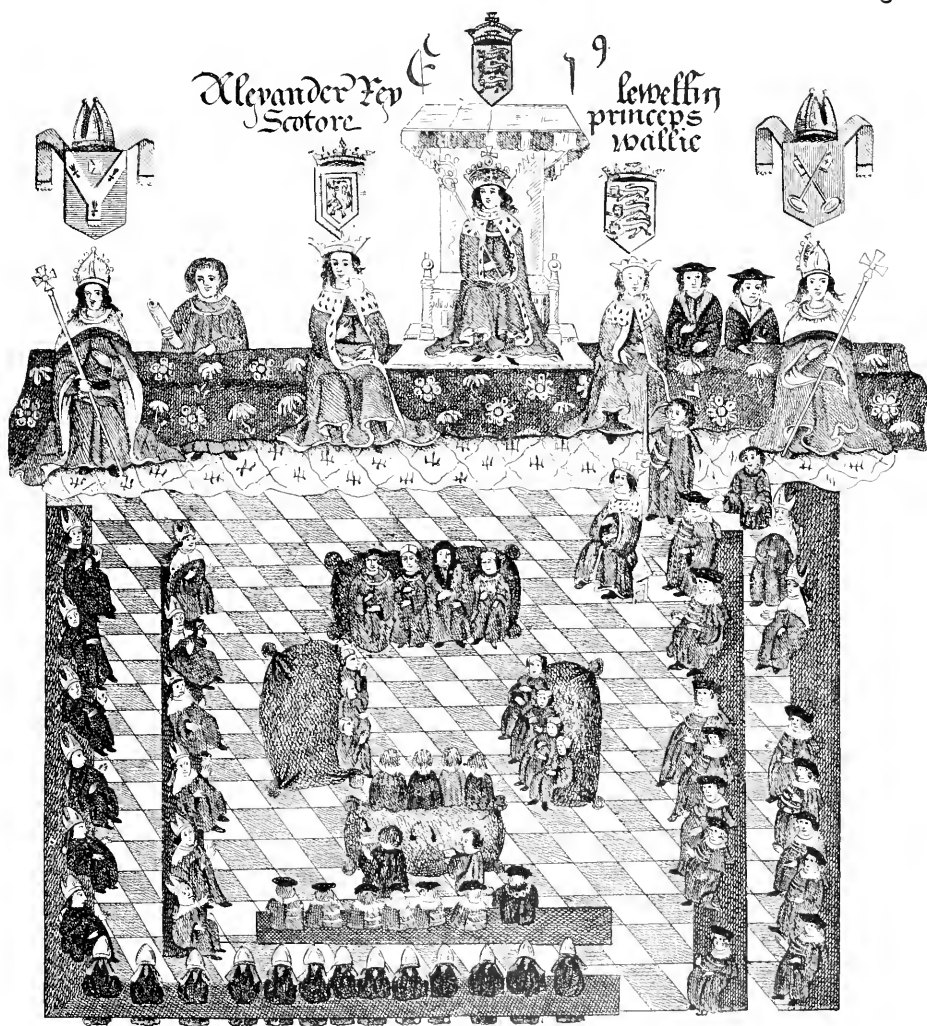
As for the dignity of the position which now makes membership of the popular House so great an object of ambition to many, it was non-existent. The representative, especially if he sat for a town, oftentimes excited compassion rather than envy. He was a sort of upper servant, who had arduous and occasionally unpleasant duties to perform, and whose opinions were of so little account that he was only allowed to express them by proxy. Like any other servant, he had his wages. These varied according to the period. In the middle of the fifteenth century they appear to have stood at two shillings a day, and even less, judging from an entry in the Canterbury records.\* A century later they had risen to something like five shillings a day for each day spent either in attendance in Parliament or in travelling to or fro between Westminster and the borough. Where a town wished to be particularly generous, it sometimes brought the allowances up to as much as ten shillings per diem. But for the most part the honour of sending a representative to Parliament was so little appreciated that the townsmen were only too glad of an excuse to get rid of the obligation. It is on record that, as a special favour, Richard II., in consideration of the action of the inhabitants of Colchester in fortifying their town, absolved them for five years from the obligation of sending burgesses to Parliament. Edward III. granted a similar "privilege" to



GEOFFREY CHAUCER,

The Father of English Poetry, sometime Clerk of the Works at Westminster under appointment from Richard II.

\* "1444-5. In this year the wage of John Malling, who represented the city in Parliament, was reduced from two shillings to twelve pence a day."—Historical MS., 9th Report, p. 115.

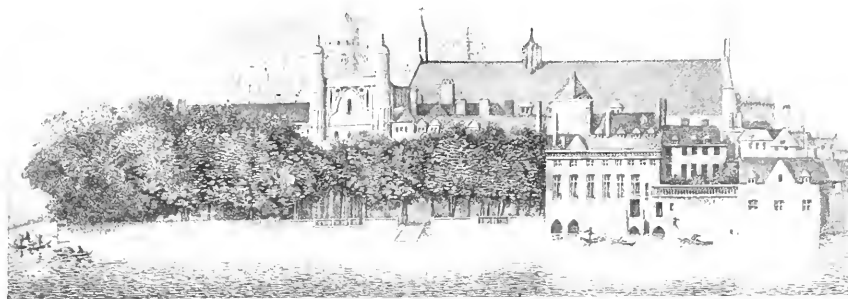


PARLIAMENT OF EDWARD I.

This curious and interesting picture is probably the earliest authentic view in existence of Parliament in session. It is from an ancient picture in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries.

the county of Northumberland, out of consideration for their poverty owing to the raids of the Scots. On like grounds Lancashire enjoyed the felicity of being unrepresented in several Parliaments. It sometimes happened that the payment was made in kind, as in 1463, in the case of Sir John Strange, the member for the then important seaport of Dunwich, who agreed to take "a cade and half a barrel of herrings for his fee."

Occasionally the constituency deemed itself fortunate in finding an individual who would



A VIEW OF THE PALACE AND ABBEY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

The feature of this picture is the tree-embowered garden on the river side of the Palace

represent them at Westminster gratuitously. A case of this kind was that of Sir Robert Hitcham, Anne of Denmark's Attorney-General and Judge of the County Palatine of Ely, who, early in the seventeenth century, undertook to serve the borough of King's Lynn gratuitously, "in consideration of which tender care for their pecuniary resources, the Corporation, on the occasion of his passing through the town on his way to Ely in July 1610, entertained him handsomely and gave him a gratuity of twenty pounds." These were indeed halcyon days for the aspiring public man. But there was a reverse to the picture. The hiring implied constant service, and if this was not rendered—well, the paymaster could dock the wages. That this was done is shown by the records of the Parliament of 50 Edward III., where note is made of the fact that the wages of the Knights of Gloucester and Oxford were disallowed "because they neglected their work." A statute of the reign of Henry VIII. indicates that at that later period the principle of no work no pay still obtained. This sets forth that the law and custom of Parliament was "that no members have writs to levy their expenses but those who staid to the end of the session, such only excepted who had licence to depart, who should have their expenses down to the time of departure provided they returned to the performance of their duties." This loss, adds the ordinance, "was accounted a great disparagement, yea, punishment, in former times, making them contemptible in the counties and cities for which they served." Marvell, who sat for Hull at the close of the seventeenth century, was one of the last Parliamentary representatives to receive wages. The last formal record of a payment, however, is in 1681, in the case of Thomas King, who sat for Harwich, and instituted successful proceedings against the borough for arrears of salary as member.

Long before the system of payment of members was finally abandoned, a practice had arisen of fining members for laxity of attendance. As far back as 1382 an "ordinance for the more regular attendance in Parliament" was made, inflicting pains and penalties on absentees. This declared that "all and singular persons and commonalties who shall henceforth have summons of Parliament shall come as they were bound to do and had been accustomed in ancient times"; and it went on to say "that whatsoever person who shall thenceforth have such summons, be he Archbishop, Bishop, Abbott, Prior, Duke, Earl, Baron, Banneret, Knight of County, Citizen of City, Burgess of Borough, or other singular person or commonalty whatsoever, shall be absent or shall not come on such summons, if he cannot reasonably and honestly have excuse towards the King, shall be amerced and otherwise punished." In the troublous times of Mary, a body of members, thirty-seven in number, who kept away from the House to avoid participation in the persecuting measures of the reign, were criminally prosecuted and fined. A like fate overtook some absent representatives in the twenty-third

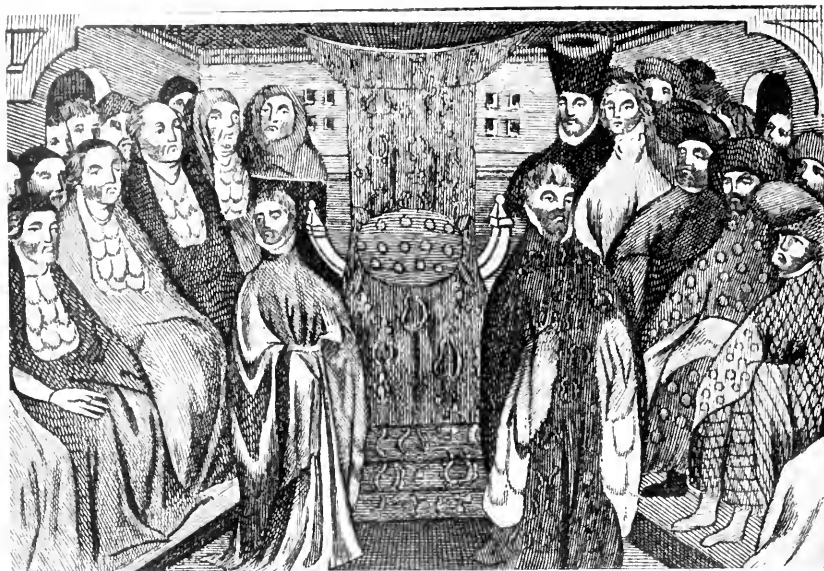
year of Elizabeth's reign, when fines of £20 were imposed on knights and £10 on burgesses. Again, in Stuart days, when the great struggle between the Parliament and the King was in progress, repeated efforts were made to keep members up to the mark. The first method adopted to secure punctuality of attendance was a fine for absence at prayers. A shilling, which went to the "poor-box," was the regular impost. It happened that the very day after an order penalising absent members in this fashion had been passed (in October 1641), the Speaker himself was late. Thereupon, according to the indefatigable D'Ewes, the first systematic reporter of Parliamentary proceedings, "Sir H. Mildmay stood up and said to the Speaker he did hope that hereafter he would come in time; which made the Speaker throw down twelvence upon the table." D'Ewes argued ingeniously that the order was to fine "after prayers," and that, therefore, the Speaker had not transgressed; but "the Speaker having cast down his shilling would not take it up again."

In 1647, according to Rushworth, more stringent measures were adopted. On October 9th in that year, a "call of the House" was ordered, and one hundred and fifty members being found absent, the House, after debating the subject all day, "ordered that such members as have not appeared according to summons shall pay the sum of £20." It is not clear that the fine was ever paid, but whether so or not, the measures adopted were not very effectual, judging from the frequent references to the same subject in subsequent debates, and the repeated orders of the House passed to enforce attendance. With the dawn of the eighteenth century the system had disappeared. There had then come into Parliament the sport-loving, pleasure-seeking, hard-drinking and swearing country gentleman of the Squire Western type, and with his advent Parliamentary representation became fashionable. To be a member of Parliament was to be a personality. So far from requiring to be paid for services, men of position were only too eager to pay for the privilege. In process of time enormous



RICHARD II. PASSING SENTENCE OF BANISHMENT ON THE DUKE OF HERFORD (AFTERWARDS HENRY IV.)  
AND THE EARL MARSHAL, THE DUKE OF NORFOLK.

The episode took place in one of the apartments of the Palace, probably in the Painted Chamber.



THE PARLIAMENT IN WHICH RICHARD II.'S RESIGNATION WAS DECLARED AND THE DUKE OF LANCASTER (HENRY IV.) RECOGNISED AS KING.

fortunes were squandered on a single election, such was the social lustre which a seat at St. Stephen's shed upon its occupants.

In dealing with the personal aspect of the old Parliaments we have somewhat outstripped our narrative, and it is necessary to go back a considerable period in order to resume once more the thread. When Parliament was last seen in action it was as a single body, conducting its deliberations oftentimes in the actual presence of the King. This system continued until as late as the eleventh year of the reign of Edward I., when a separation was decreed, partly, probably, for reasons of State, partly for prosaic considerations connected with the difficulty of finding accommodation in the Palace for the increasing numbers brought together by the meetings of Parliament, now held with a certain regularity. It was in the ancient Chapter House of the Abbey across the way that the faithful Commons found a refuge. In this beautiful old building, consecrated already by many great traditions, the Commons House set itself to establish an independent position. There it continued for the best part of two centuries, making history, and consolidating, meanwhile, the power of the people. The last sitting was held on the day of Henry VIII.'s death. There is a curious story connected with the members' departure. This is to the effect that on one occasion the Commons, forgetting the solemn purpose of their assembling, became so riotous and created so great a turmoil that the Abbot waxed indignant at the profanation, and collecting a sufficiently strong party turned the whole legislative company out of his house and swore that the place should not again be defiled with a like rabble. It is an amusing tale, but there is no reason to suppose it has any greater foundation than many other picturesque fables with which the pages of history are strewn. The likeliest explanation is that the accession of Edward VI. gave greater freedom to ministers of state, and so paved the way for the return of the Commons to the Palace, where their presence was scabrous from many points of view.

## CHAPTER II.

### *MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S—THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.*

THE popular branch of the Legislature migrated from one famous building to a not less historic one. Its new home was the Collegiate Chapel of St. Stephen, a glorious fane which, as history clearly shows, had a foremost place amongst the great ecclesiastical edifices of the country in decorative beauty and architectural dignity. Here it remained located for the next three hundred years, gathering to it a wealth of tradition unsurpassed by that of any purely secular building in the country. Looking back upon those records of three centuries, so crowded with events of high national importance, so strangely moving in their personal associations, it is impossible not to regret that the name now alone remains of the historic edifice. We could have wished to see the place where the battles of English freedom were fought—to have surveyed the stage upon which were enacted some of the greatest dramas in the world's political history. But if the material substance is not there, the graceful shadows of old time linger, reminding us of the departed glories of a spot which will ever be sacred ground to the Englishman.

Compared with what it was afterwards to become, the popular chamber at this period upon which it first entered into possession of St. Stephen's Chapel was an insignificant body indeed. Known familiarly as the Nether House, it acted up to its title. Just before its removal, when the imperious Wolsey, acting as the jackal for his Royal master, bounced into the House "with his maces, with his pillars, his pole-axes, his crosse, his hatte, and the great seal, too," to demand a subsidy of a fifth part of every man's goods—as barefaced an act of regal spoliation as ever was attempted—he was received by Sir Thomas More, the Speaker, on his knees, and an abject apology was tendered for the silence of the members, who were "abashed at the sight of so noble a personage, who was able to awe the wisest and most learned men in the realm."



SIR THOMAS MORE.

From a painting after Holbein, showing the famous Speaker of the House of Commons and Lord Chancellor at the age of 47.

It was in a more self-reliant spirit that the Parliament of Edward VI. addressed itself to its duties, and the sanctioning of the Book of Common Prayer will live as a splendid monument of its courage and devotion to the public interests. But the growth in power indicated by the passing of this and other beneficent legislation was only transitory. When in November 1553 the same year—the Commons sent through their Speaker a message to Queen Mary protesting against her projected union with Philip of Spain, they accepted meekly a rebuff conveyed to them in terms intended to be discourteous. "We have heard," said the indignant Queen, "much from you of the incommodities which may attend our marriage—we have not heard of the commodities thereof—one of which is of some weight with us—the commodity, namely, of our private inclination. We have not forgotten our Coronation oath. We shall marry as God direct our choice, to His honour and our country's good." Far more to their discredit than shown in pocketing the feeble opposition entailing measures of the when there was a pockets being touched re-establish the a show of real spirit lators. Then their to their swords, and ominous murmurs as well as the ability properties, that the back. Their attitude ever, serves but to light the general acterised their

If the Commons rods by Mary, they scorpions by Elizabeth, the great Queen repatience which she conceal the eneroach- sidered them, of the About the only touch is in her reply to the that she should take Unlike her sister,

resent the Parliament's essay at match-making. "She intended," she said, "to spend her own life for the good of her people; and if she married she would choose a husband who would be as careful for them as herself. If, on the contrary, she continued in her present mind, she could not doubt that with the help of Parliament the succession might be secured, and some fit governor might be provided, peradventure more beneficial to the realm than such offspring as might come of her." "Children," she added, were uncertain blessings, and for herself "it would be enough that a marble stone should declare that a Queen having reigned such a time, lived and died a virgin."

The graciousness of this message was so little maintained in subsequent communications that the wonder will ever be how her Majesty brought herself to the frame of mind to meet such an intrusion into her private affairs with the honeyed words she did. For the most part her attitude towards the popular chamber was that of a schoolmaster towards a body of



CARDINAL WOLSEY.

The great ecclesiast and Minister of the reign of Henry VIII. His chief residence was York Place (now Whitehall).

the pusillanimity quietly this snub was made to the persecuted Queen. Only prospect of their by a proposal to monasteries was there on the part of legis- hands went menacingly there were such about the disposition to defend their own Court prudently drew in this instance, how- bring into the stronger servility which char- actions.

were scourged with were whipped with Imperious by nature, garded with an im- never attempted to ments, as she con- popular authority, of softness to be found speeches to the House address of Parliament to herself a husband. Elizabeth did not





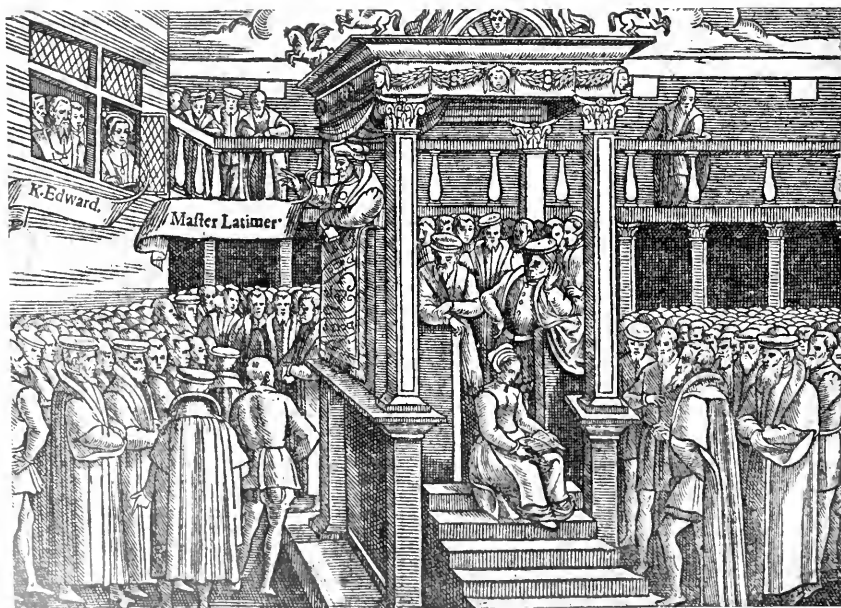
From an original painting by A. D. M. M. M.

#### AN INTRUSION UPON THE COMMONS IN THE CHAPTER HOUSE.

"The impertinent Wolsey hurried into the House to demand a subsidy of a fifth of every man's goods."

rebellious pupils. When importuned a second time to marry, the peers on this occasion joining in the petition, she replied scathingly, "she was not surprised at the Commons; they had small experience, and had acted like boys; but that the Lords should have gone along with them, she confessed had filled her with wonder." The fine contempt for the Commons which the Queen showed in this instance took a deeper note when it fell to her to dissolve Parliament somewhat later. Enraged at the attitude of the House, she stood forward and delivered an explosive harangue, in which in familiar parlance she gave the Commons "a bit of her mind"—and a considerable bit too. "I have in this assembly found such dissimulation where I always professed plainness, that I marvel thereat; yea, two faces under one hood and the body rotten, being covered with the two visors, succession and liberty—which they determined must be either presently granted, denied, or deferred; in granting whereof they had their desire, and denying or deferring thereof—those things being so plaudable as, indeed, to all men they are—they thought to work me that mischief which never foreign country could bring to pass, which is the hatred of the Commons." "Henceforth," she said in conclusion, "whether I live to see the like assembly or no, or whoever it be, yet beware how you prove your prince's patience as you have now done mine."

Elizabeth's bark was worse than her bite, and after this violent tirade she sent the Commons away "with comfortable words." But that she could bite on occasion was proved a few years later, when an attempt was made by an over-venturesome member to thwart the imperious lady's will. The trouble arose out of the discussion of two bills respecting Church rites and ceremonies. Hearing that these were before the House, Elizabeth sent express commands that from henceforth no bills concerning religion were to be considered without the prior approval of the clergy. In fear and trembling at their Royal mistress's anger, the Commons sent up the measures to the Queen, humbly beseeching her Majesty "not to conceive



MAISTER LATIMER PREACHING BEFORE KING EDWARD VI. IN THE "PREACHING-PLACE" AT WESTMINSTER.



SIR NICHOLAS BACON.

Father of the illustrious Lord Bacon. Lord Keeper in the reign of Elizabeth. Remarkable in his later years for his corpulence. This occasioned the Queen's remark "Sir Nicholas's soul lodges well."

an ill opinion of the House if so it were that her Majesty should not like well of the said bills, or of the parties that prepared them." The anticipation of trouble was speedily fulfilled. On the following day the Treasurer of the Household reported "that her Majesty seemed utterly to mislike the first bill, and *him that brought the same into the House.*" Her further will and pleasure was that the measure should be abandoned. Thus brought up, the Commons responded like a well-whipped hound—the bills were promptly abandoned. But there was one man, Peter Wentworth, who did not relish the subservience of the House and the growing insolence of the Crown. He held his peace at the time, but when some little while after the episode described her Majesty sent down a message to the House commanding them to refrain from all further speeches or arguments touching the business of the Queen of Scots and the Duke of Norfolk, upon which there had been some debate, he as soon as opportunity presented broke out into decidedly unparliamentary, if not unconstitutional language. "In this House, which is termed a place of free speech," he remarked, "there is nothing so necessary for the preservation of Prince and State as free speech; and without this it is a scorn and a mockery to call it a Parliament House, for in truth it is none but a very school of flattery and dissimulation. Two things, Mr. Speaker, do great hurt in this place: the one is a rumour that the Queen's Majesty liketh not such a matter—whosoever preferreth it she will be offended with him; or the contrary. The other is a message sometimes brought into the House, desiring that this or that complaint should not be mentioned. He wished such rumours and messages were buried with the father of them in hell." The House was horrified at this rank blasphemy, and still more, no doubt, at the daring criticism of the Lord's anointed. "Out of a reverent regard of her Majesty's honour," they stopped him from further committing himself, and to additionally dissociate themselves from his sentiments ordered that he "should be presently committed to the serjeant's ward as prisoner, and so remaining should be examined upon his said speech for the extenuating his fault therein, by a committee consisting of all the Privy Council being of this House and other members." As a sequel to the examination, which was conducted in the Star Chamber, Wentworth was sent to the Tower, where he remained for a month, at the expiration of which time Her Majesty graciously sent word to the House that he had been sufficiently punished. The obsequious Commons hardly knew how to express themselves in words fulsome enough to show their appreciation of the Queen's magnanimity. A harangue was delivered by the Lord Chancellor on her Majesty's clemency and goodness, and members were exhorted to take the incident to heart, "lest that in forgetting our duties so far, we may give just cause to our gracious Sovereign to think that

this her clemency hath given occasion of further boldness, and thereby so much grieve and provoke her, as, contrary to her most gracious and mild consideration, she be constrained to change her natural clemency into necessary and just severity."

In January 1580, on the meeting of a new Parliament, a further opportunity occurred for the House to testify its lack of backbone. Paul Wentworth, brother of the previous culprit, having brought forward and secured the passing of a motion in favour of a day of fasting and prayer at the Temple Church, and decreeing that Parliamentary proceedings should commence every day with a sermon, Sir Christopher Hatton, the Vice-Chamberlain, came hot-foot from the Palace to deliver a sarcastic message from the Queen to the effect that "she did much admire at so great a rashness in the House as to put in execution such an innovation without her privy and pleasure first made known to them." The effect of the Queen's words was electrical. Members almost tumbled over each other in their eagerness to support a motion of this tenor: "That the House should acknowledge their offence and contempt, and humbly crave forgiveness with a full purpose to forbear committing the like for the future." Degradation could

scarcely further go; but it is gratifying to know that there were still some who were not prepared to allow the House to be ridden over rough-shod without so much as a protest. Peter Wentworth, undeterred by previous experience of the weight of the Queen's strong right arm, on the assembling of Parliament, and unmoved by a fiery speech from the throne in reprobation of "idle heads which will not stick to hazard their own estates, which will meddle with reforming the Church and transforming the Commonwealth," presented a petition "desiring the lords of the Upper House to join with them of the Lower, in imploring her Majesty to entail the succession of the Crown, for which they had already prepared a bill." The defiance was too deliberate to pass unnoticed. Swiftly the bolt descended, not only upon the daring Wentworth, but upon his seconder and two other members who had spoken in favour of the measure. In duration they remained for some time. It might be supposed that by this time the protesters had suffered enough to convince them that the game was a dangerous one. But there was something of the stubbornness of the Parliamentarians of a succeeding generation in their temperament; and when another Parliament met, in 1593, the damnable Peter Wentworth was found at the fore courting the Queen's displeasure by reviving the



QUEEN ELIZABETH IN PARLIAMENT.

The chamber here represented is an ancient chamber of the Palace erected in the twelfth century. The Commons are shown crowding at the Bar.

question of the succession. The usual result followed, as a matter of course. Wentworth was soon occupying his old quarters in the Tower, and Sir Henry Bromley and two other members who had been guilty of like indiscretions were enjoying a less exalted martyrdom in the Fleet. A timid protest was raised in the House against these imprisonments, but nothing came of it; and meantime another member, a Mr. Morrice, brought himself into hot water by daring to draft two bills touching the abuses of the ecclesiastical courts. They never came formally before the House, but the Queen got news of them, and she sent for the Speaker, with the consequence that the unfortunate member was committed to the custody of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—of all persons—and he was dealt with as the heinousness of his offence demanded. Morrice was the last of the victims of Elizabeth's caprice. When a new Parliament met her infirmities were creeping on her, and the assertive spirit which had distinguished her relations with the popular representatives in earlier times was no longer what it was. To the close, however, she continued to make the Commons "know their place." They realised that though the rein was loose it was still firmly held.

The Parliament's abject submissiveness in the face of Elizabeth's domineering treatment cannot be denied or wholly extenuated. Even Hatsell, its faithful servitor and admirer, is compelled to acknowledge that a lamentable lack of spirit was shown in meeting the repeated encroachments of the Crown. Elizabeth, on her part, we may readily believe, held the popular representatives in wholesome contempt. Susceptible though she was to flattery, she could not tolerate the fulsome adulation with which it was the custom of the Commons to overwhelm her. After the defeat of the Armada, when she was addressed by the Speaker (Crooke) and told in the customary insincere style that "the peace of the kingdom had been defended by the mighty arm of their dread and sacred queen," Elizabeth bluntly replied, "No, but by the mighty hand of God, Mr. Speaker." There was here the honest dislike of the strong mind for the cringer, and almost the whole history of Elizabeth's Parliament is one of abasement and "whispering humbleness." Its position of degradation is well illustrated by an incident which occurred shortly after Elizabeth's death.

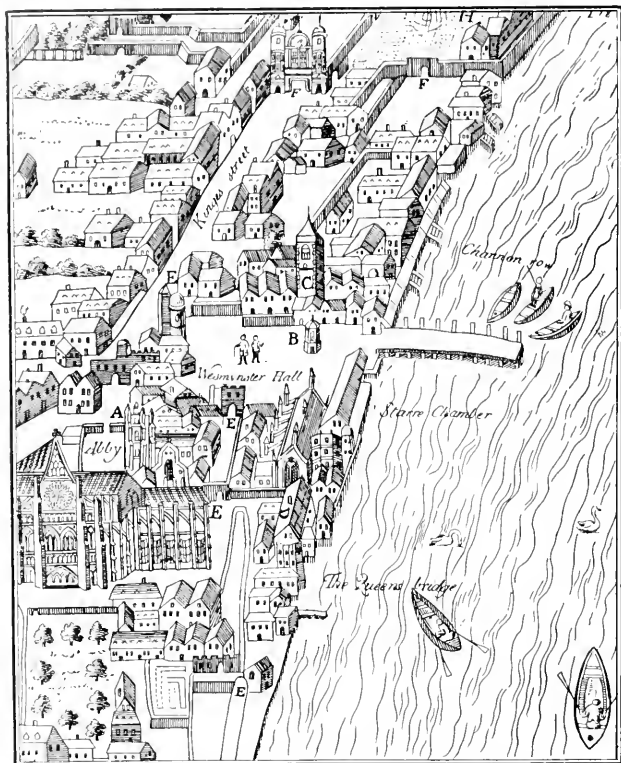
On the first day of the opening of Parliament "the faithful Commons" crowded to the Upper House, as was their wont; but the way was barred to them by a Yeoman of the Guard, Brian Tash by name, who seeing them approaching, slammed the door on them with the contemptuous words, "Goodmen burgesses, you come not here." The "goodmen burgesses" had to pocket their affront as best they could; but the time was coming when they were to be held in very different estimation. A mighty leaven was working which was destined to bring the popular chamber into a position of undisputed authority and eminence.

Servile as Elizabeth's Parliaments mostly were, they left a conspicuous mark on the statute book of the country. The system of poor law administration which is in operation to-day was founded by them. To them also belongs the honour of the initiation of the laws relating to the maintenance of highways, the building of bridges, and the administration of charitable trusts. In all directions there was steady development in the domain of domestic



WILLIAM CECIL, LORD BURGHLEY.

This quaint picture of Elizabeth's great minister is reproduced from an engraving of a portrait in the Bodleian Gallery, Oxford.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE PALACE, TAKEN FROM AGGAS'S MAP OF WESTMINSTER.

government. Nor was the period unfruitful in higher constitutional achievements. The power of the people's representatives to control their own affairs was asserted on several occasions, and not unsuccessfully; and the right of the House of Commons to deal with contested election returns was also upheld. With a monarch less able and determined than Elizabeth there is little doubt that the constitutional struggle, which subsequently burst upon the country, would have been hastened by many years. As it was, it was only by packing the House of Commons with her subservient tools, and by the exercise of arts and artifices which she knew so well how to practise, that the Queen held her own so well as she did.

Elizabeth's connection with the Palace of Westminster, apart

from her frequent appearances upon its Parliamentary stage, was a very close one. She had a portion of the old buildings reconstructed for her use, and occasionally lived there, holding Court with the magnificence characteristic of her reign. In one apartment, standing upon the site of the Old Court of Exchequer, at the north-east corner of Westminster Hall, according to tradition, she was accustomed to divert herself with music played by musicians placed in a gallery which occupied one end of the room. Another apartment close by was used by the Queen as a sleeping-chamber, and was identified with her name long after she had passed away. Westminster then, as Aggas's map shows, was a widely different place to what it is to-day. But it was not without its advantages from the residential standpoint. The river then was the great highway between the City and the West; and the proximity of the Palace Gardens to it facilitated the arrangements for those water pageants in which the Virgin Queen found so much enjoyment. Taking it all in all, the Elizabethan period of St. Stephen's was one of the most interesting, as well as important, in the history of the Palace.



*From the collection  
in the National Portrait Gallery*

## QUEEN ELIZABETH

The great monarch, who reigned from 1558 to 1603, is shown here in a portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger.





## CHAPTER III.

### *MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S (continued)—THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.*

It was a remarkable transition from the sway of the masculine Elizabeth to that of the pedantic, logic-chopping James. As one writer well puts it, "it was as if the Crown had passed not from a woman to a man, but from a man to a woman." Vanity was a marked characteristic of both monarchs, but there was this difference, that while Elizabeth's native shrewdness always prevented her from allowing her weakness to militate against her personal interests or those of the State, James was so oppressed with a sense of his individual importance that he continually pushed matters to extremes merely to assert his personal dignity.

From the very outset of the reign there was friction between the King and Parliament. A disputed election return, the imprisonment of a member of the House of Commons in the

Fleet for debt, in violation of the privilege of Parliament, and the committal to the Tower of Sir Christopher Pigott, member for Bucks, for words used in the House, each in its turn provided material for controversy. In all these cases James prudently abandoned his claims when he found that they were untenable; and this circumstance, combined with the influence of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, to which we shall have to refer at greater length in a subsequent chapter, tended to disarm the Commons. Even when he a little later ventured upon the extreme course of levying imposts without the consent of the Commons, there was no other action on their part but a dignified protest, followed by an ineffectual attempt to pass a Bill rescinding the illegal taxation. For years the wrangling went on, intermitted by violent acts of usurpation on the part of the King connected with the raising of funds, and disgraceful episodes such as the execution of Raleigh on a charge of treason fifteen years old. James's temper, never very sweet, completely broke down on several occasions. After one particularly irritating struggle with Parliament, in 1611, he wrote: "Wherein we have misbehaved we know not, but . . . our fame and actions have been tossed like tennis balls among them,



*From the painting by Paul van Somer.*

JAMES I., AND VI. OF SCOTLAND.

In whose reign the struggle for constitutional liberty commenced.

and all that spite and malice durst do to disgrace and inflame us hath been used. To be short, this lower House by their behaviour have perilled and annoyed our health, wounded our reputation, emboldened all ill-natured people, encroached upon many of our privileges, and plagued our people with their delays." A few years later, maddened by the tenacious assertion by the Commons of their privileges, James sent for them to Whitehall, and tore up all their Bills before their faces. This insult was only a prelude to an even more dramatic display of contempt for the pretensions of the popular chamber. This was the outrage on the Journals of the House, which is recognised by most writers as one of the great constitutional landmarks.

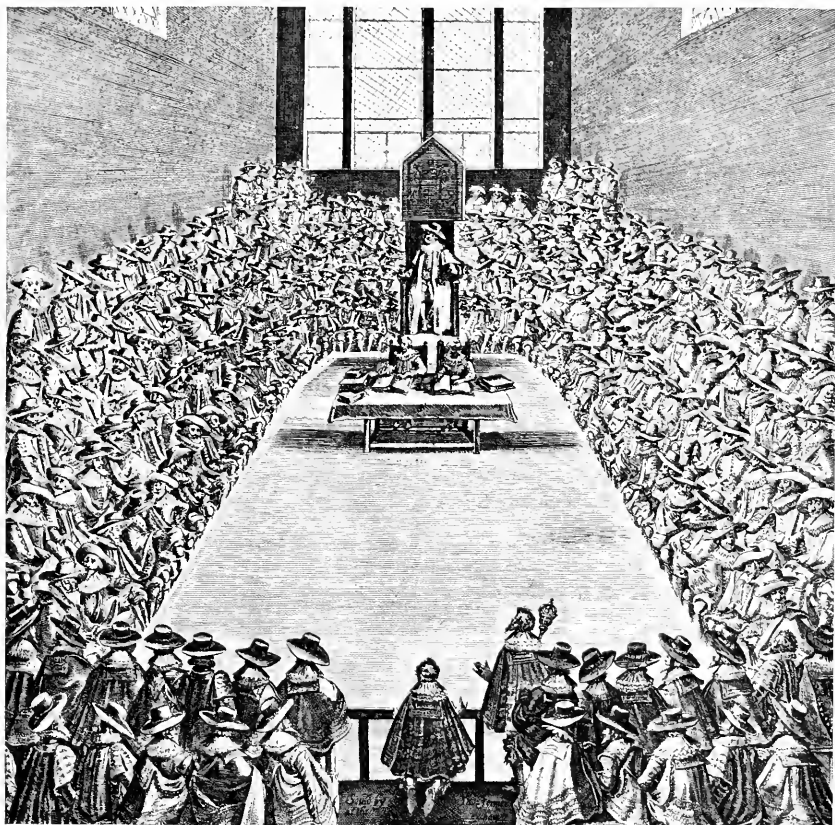
The incident arose out of a protracted dispute as to the arrest of a certain Sir Edwyn Sandys, who was committed to prison for something said in the course of a debate in the House. The House had promptly challenged the King's right to arrest; and James, while disclaiming that Sandys was arrested for his speech in the House, as promptly asserted his right "to punish any man's misdemeanours in Parliament, as well during their sitting as after," and his intention to exercise that right when "any man's insolent behaviour" there should render it necessary so to do. Further passages of arms ensued; and then the House,

on December 18th, 1621, "sitting by candlelight"—a most unusual circumstance—caused to be entered in the Journals of the House the famous protest. Drawn up by Coke, Noy, Glanville, and other well-known members of the time, it put very succinctly and forcibly the rights of Parliament. It affirms "that the liberties, franchises, privileges, and jurisdiction of Parliament are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England; and that the arduous and urgent affairs concerning the King, State and defence of the realm, and of the Church of England, and of the making and maintenance of laws and redress of mischiefs and grievances which daily happen within this realm, are proper subjects and matter of counsel and debate in Parliament, and that in the handling and prosecuting of those businesses, every member of the House hath, and of good right ought to have,



SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

His twelve years' imprisonment in the Tower, composed his great "History of the World." He was beheaded in Old Palace Yard in 1618.



PARLIAMENT IN SESSION IN THE REIGN OF JAMES I.

The picture shows a prisoner kneeling at the bar receiving an admonition from the Speaker.

freedom of speech to propound, treat, reason and bring to conclusion the same; that the Commons in Parliament have like liberty and freedom to treat of those matters in such order as in their judgments shall seem fittest; and that every such member of the said House hath like freedom from all impeachment, imprisonment, and molestation (other than by censure of the House itself) for or concerning any bill, speaking, reasoning, or declaring of any matter or matters touching the Parliament or Parliamentary business; and that if any of the said members be complained of, and questioned for anything said or done in Parliament, the same is to be showed to the King by the advice and assent of all the Commons assembled before the King give credence to any private information."

This was the ever memorable declaration. It was well calculated to arouse resentment in a monarch whose special pride it was that he was endowed with absolute powers. But James's anger went beyond all ordinary bounds. He dispersed the House by a compulsory adjournment, and commanded that the Journal Book should be sent to Whitehall. Then, having torn out the offending page, he in his turn "entered of record" an Act of Council which describes the why and wherefore of his action:—

"WHITEHALL, 30 Dec., 1621.

"His Most Excellent Majesty coming this day to the Council, the Prince his Highness, and all the Lords and others of his Majestie's Privy Council sitting about him, and all the judges then in London, which were six in number, there attending upon his Majesty; the Clerk of the Commons House of Parliament was called for, and commanded to produce his Journal book, wherein was noted and entries made of most passages that were in the Commons House of Parliament; and amongst other things there was written down the Form of a Protestation concerning sundry Liberties, Privileges, and Franchises of Parliament; with which Form of Protestation his Majesty was justly offended."

The document goes on to give reasons which his Majesty thought fit that the Protestation should be utterly annihilated, and concludes:—

"These things considered, his Majesty did, this present day, in full Assembly of his Council, and in the presence of the judges, declare the said Protestation to be invalid, annulled, void and of no effect; and did further, *manu sua propria* (with his own hand) take the said



WESTMINSTER HALL AND THE ABBEY FROM THE VILLAGE OF CHARING.

On the right is St. James's Palace, in the centre an old conduit, and to the left a public-house.

Protestation out of the Journal book of the Clerk of the Commons House of Parliament; and commanded an Act of Council to be made thereupon, and this Act to be entered in the Register of Council Cases."

At the House of Commons to-day the curious visitor may see in the library the pages of the Journal which James mutilated. They are mute yet eloquent evidences of a singularly small action—small in the spirit which prompted it—which has exercised a vast influence on the course of history.

James was not content with the simple excision of the offending entry. He followed his Order in Council up by a pompous proclamation, in which he denounced certain "ill-tempered spirits and evil affected and discontented persons," who, "after daring to treat of our high prerogatives and of sundry things that, without our special direction, were no fit subjects to be treated of in Parliament, had persuaded the rest in an unreasonable hour of the day and a very thin House to conclude and enter a protestation of their liberties," in such ambiguous and general words as might serve for future times to invade most of our inseparable rights and prerogatives annexed to our imperial crown . . . an usurpation that the majesty of a King can never means endure."



SIR EDWARD COKE.

Speaker of the House of Commons in 1603. Mainly instrumental in carrying the famous Petition of Right.

may have my prayers to God for you, and procure the love of me and a happy end of this Parliament." A little more than twelve months after the delivery of this curious speech "the wisest fool in Europe," as Sully called him, died at Theobalds, in Essex.

It may be doubted whether James's feeling for the House of Commons was really the contemptuous one which his public acts appear to indicate. In his heart of hearts he probably had a wholesome respect for the power vested in the people's representatives, even under the restrictions imposed upon them by Royal interpretations of the Constitution in his own and his predecessor's reign. Colour is given to this view by a story related of Sir Robert Cotton, who was one of twelve members appointed to wait upon James at Newmarket in 1620 with a protest against the King's unconstitutional acts. Seeing the deputation approaching, the King called out in sharp tones, "Chairs! chairs! Here be twal kynyges comin." Another characteristic anecdote told of him is that, mounting a horse which usually was very quiet, but now began to bound and prance, his Majesty

Following the course of this proclamation came the arrest and the committal to the Tower of Sir Edward Coke and Sir Robert Philips, two of those most active in the drafting of the protestation; and the consignment to various prisons of Selden, Pym, and Mallory, three other leading protesters. A further trio of conspirators—Sir Thomas Crew, Sir Dudley Digges, and Sir Peter Hayman—were exiled. The despotic measures taken were not without their effect. No really serious constitutional disputes arose to disturb James's peace from this period to the end of the reign. So complacent did he become under the soothing influence of these placid days, that in meeting his last Parliament on February 12th, 1624, we find him speaking in a vein of exaggerated friendliness. "I am," he said by way of preface, "your own kindly King," and then, having enlarged upon his extreme anxiety to maintain the liberties of the House of Commons, he proceeded to remark: "Let not any stir you up to law questions, debates, quibbs, tricks, and jerks, but continue yourselves in that honest modesty, whereby you



SIR JOHN GLANVILLE.

Speaker of the House of Commons during "the Short Parliament" (1640).

exclaimed, "The devil i' my soul, sirrah, an you be not quiet, I'll send you to the five hundred kings in the House of Commons."

Varying estimates have been formed of James's character, but there is a remarkable agreement amongst all historians that it was his abuse of authority quite as much as his son's misgovernment which brought about the great struggle which less than twenty years later deluged England with blood. The public mind was genuinely alarmed at the successive encroachments of the Crown, and in this condition it was peculiarly receptive of views antagonistic to the extreme application of doctrines enhancing the status of the sovereign.

Charles I., on his part, was unfortunately too much the son of his father in temperament to perceive the drift of events. Instead of attempting to allay suspicion by the adoption of a strictly moderate and unprovocative policy, he seemed to go out of his way to raise questions calculated to excite controversy. Barely had he been twelve months on the throne before he was involved in a furious dispute with Parliament over their right to call in question the actions of his favourite minister, Buckingham. This nobleman had brought himself into bad odour by his gross mismanagement of the Cadiz expedition, and a demand was made for his impeachment. To this Charles replied in a message couched in a strain of haughty insolence; and when the Commons, in defiance of his strongly expressed views, proceeded to draw up articles of impeachment, he promptly caused to be arrested the two members who had been most active in the business. These were Sir John Eliot, a Cornishman of good family and blameless life, who was destined to fall a victim to the popular cause, and Sir Dudley Digges, a less ardent patriot, who was ultimately won over to the Royal side. The Commons, justly indignant at this despotic act, assembled with stern faces to consider their course of procedure. The Speaker's call to proceed to the orders of the day was received with angry shouts of "Sit down! sit down! No business till we are righted in our liberties."

An obsequious Court functionary beseeched the House "not to move his Majesty with trenching on his prerogative, lest you bring him out of love with Parliaments." But members were not to be moved by such considerations. "To the Bar! to the Bar!" cried many voices, and so the tumult continued until the House perforce had to be adjourned. The Peers supported the Commons in their protest, and at the end of eight days Charles was reluctantly constrained to release his victims. The episode ought to have been a lesson to the infatuated King; but, instead of that, it only seemed to act as an incentive to further deeds of violence.

In all disputes he came off second best. At length, wearied with repeated rebuffs, he dissolved Parliament in indecent haste, peremptorily saying, when asked to allow the Commons a longer sitting, "No, not a day more." After this came attempts at taxation without the authority



JOHN SELDEN.

A distinguished opponent of Charles I.'s policy. He was committed to the Tower on the dissolution of Parliament in 1629, and remained a prisoner until 1634.



THE HOUSE OF LORDS IN THE TIME OF CHARLES I.

Showing the King on the throne, with the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in their robes.

of Parliament, followed by the memorable protest of Hampden and other patriots, who declined to pay the illegal exactions, and were imprisoned as a consequence. Their detention created a flame in the country which was not to be extinguished until the unhappy Charles had been sent to his doom, and the last vestiges of monarchical institutions had disappeared.

It does not lie within our province to go in any detail into the events of this stormy period in English history, so familiar to all constitutional students. Our purpose will be served by touching upon a few of the more stirring episodes in the great struggle which occurred within the Palace of Westminster, and for the most part under the venerable roof of St. Stephen's Chapel. The first move in the strange, eventful drama was the summoning of the Parliament of 1628. This body, in point of intellect not less than influence, was one of the most remarkable that had ever met at Westminster. Daniel Webster, the great American orator, once declared that the oratory which marked it was amongst the finest he had ever read. The compliment is not undeserved. Fragmentary as the records are, they supply examples of eloquence, characterised by a loftiness of sentiment, a wealth of telling illustration and a graceful imagery such as are rarely encountered. A terrible earnestness, there can be no question, gave an unwonted stimulus and elevation to the debates. "The eyes of Christendom are upon us," said one speaker, and that was the feeling which dominated the assembly. They were not mere delegates, registering settled decrees, but men to whom the destinies of a nation were entrusted. The general note of the debates was sombre, as befitted the seriousness of the times. But they were not without an occasional gleam of grim humour. One singular incident which Isaac D'Israeli relates may be recalled in this connection. The House was one day sitting in startled astonishment at an overbearing message received from the King, when a whimsical, crack-brained politician, Sir James Nethersole, got up and entreated leave to tell his last night's dream. The inconsequentiality of the interruption amused the House, but Nethersole replied to the laughter by saying that "kingdoms had been saved by dreams." Allowed to proceed, he said "he saw two good pastures; a flock of sheep was in the one, and a bell-wether alone

in the other; a great ditch was between them, and a narrow bridge over the ditch." The Speaker here interposed with the remark that "it stood not with the gravity of the House to listen to dreams"; but the House was inclined to hear him out. "The sheep would sometimes go over to the bell-wether, or the bell-wether to the sheep. Once both met on the narrow bridge, and the question was who should go back, since both could not go on without danger. One sheep gave counsel that the sheep on the bridge should lie on their bellies and let the bell-wether go over their backs." The application of this dilemma he left to the House. Eliot, Wentworth, and Coke protested against the interpretation of dreams in the House, and generally poor Nethersole was snubbed; but to him belongs the credit of brightening an otherwise dark page of history.

The outcome of this Parliament was the historic Petition of Right—an ever memorable landmark in the fight for freedom. In this document it was demanded "that no man hereafter be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax, or suchlike charge without



THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES I.

Mary (afterwards Princess of Orange); James, Duke of York (afterwards James II.); Charles, Prince of Wales (afterwards Charles II.); Elizabeth (died unmarried); Anne (died in infancy).

common consent by Act of Parliament; that none be called to answer or take such oath, or to give attendance, or be confined or otherwise molested or disquieted concerning the same or for refusal thereof; that no freeman in any such manner as is before mentioned be imprisoned or detained; that your Majesty would be pleased to remove the said soldiers and marines, and that your people may not be so burthened in time to come; that the aforesaid commissions for proceeding by martial law may be revoked and annulled; and that hereafter no commissions of the like nature may issue forth to any person or persons whatever, to be executed as aforesaid, lest by colour of them any of your Majesty's subjects be destroyed or put to death contrary to the laws and franchises of the land." After some evasions Charles was eventually driven to accept this momentous document in the form of a bill. But the surrender was only in form. An attempt to draw still tighter the bonds of privilege in the matter of the tunnage and poundage dues, which Charles had established without the assent of the Commons, broke down the barrier of restraint which he had imposed on himself. Angered at the new demand sprung upon him, he put in an unexpected appearance

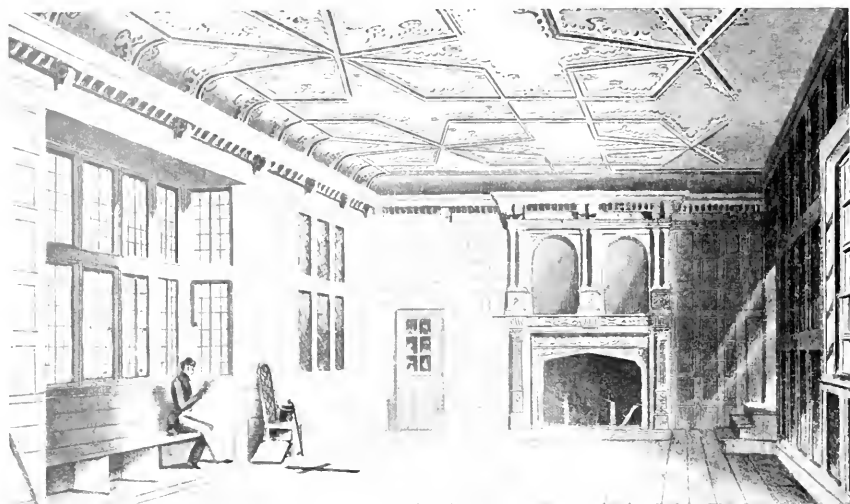




*From the picture painted in 1621 by Daniel Mytens.*

CHARLES I.,

Whose arbitrary exercises of the Royal prerogative resulted in the great Civil War.



THE STAR CHAMBER.

The home of the dread tribunal which figured so prominently in the constitutional struggle which preceded the Civil War.

at the House of Lords on June 26th, and prorogued Parliament, openly avowing that he did so to cut short the remonstrance, to which, if it went on, he "might give a harsh answer."

In the new session the old questions were revived with fresh vigour. With indomitable determination Eliot and his fellow-patriots urged the illegality of the tunnage and poundage dues. When the King found they were not to be silenced he adopted new tactics; he tried with greater success to muzzle the Speaker, and so frustrate their aims. The occupant of the chair of that day was Sir John Finch, a poor invertebrate creature, who was peculiarly susceptible to such pressure as the King could put upon him. The scene in which he disclosed the full force of the Royal influence is one of the most curious in the history of Parliament. On March 2nd, 1629, Sir John Eliot went down to the House with a remonstrance against the King's arbitrary acts in the matter of tunnage and poundage, but the Speaker declined to read it. Thereupon Sir John Eliot read the document himself, and the Speaker was asked to put the question. Finch replied that he was commanded otherwise by the King. Selden protested against the view that the Speaker could refuse to discharge his functions; but Finch's answer was that "he had express command to rise as soon as he had delivered his message." Suiting the action to the word, he prepared to leave the chair. In an instant a dozen hands were outstretched to hold him back. The Privy Councillors present endeavoured to free him, but Holles declared "he should sit still till it pleased them to rise"; whereupon, with tears in his eyes, Finch exclaimed, "I will not say I will not, but I dare not." Selden remarked that he "ever loved his person well, yet could not choose but much blame him now—that he, being the servant of the House, should refuse their command under any colour, and that his obstinacy would be a precedent to posterity, if it should go unpunished. For that hereafter, if we should meet a dishonest Speaker (and we cannot promise ourselves to the contrary), he might, under pretence of the King's command, refuse to propose the business and indictment of the House; he therefore wished him to proceed." Finch, however, was not to be moved. "With weeping and supplicatory orations" he declined to do what was required of him. As

the House could not get on with the Speaker, they determined to do without him; and Holles, amid great cheering, read a statement which denounced as an enemy to the kingdom any one who might introduce Popery or Arminianism, or aid in the exaction of poundage and tunnage. Charles, who was in the House of Lords at the time, hearing that the Commons were sitting in defiance of his orders, sent word that the Sergeant-at-Arms was to leave with the mace. Immediately the key was turned in the door of the House to prevent that functionary from leaving. Then Charles sent the captain of the band of pensioners to force the door; but this extreme step was rendered unnecessary by the rising of the House. Eight days later the Parliament was dissolved, the King in his speech attributing the step to "the undutiful and seditious carriage of the Lower House." Immediately afterwards Eliot, Selden, Strode, Holles, and other eminent patriots were by Charles's order cast into prison. Eliot remained in custody until his death, and Selden did not regain his liberty until four years after his arrest.

Eleven years elapsed before another Parliament was summoned—years full of events of the highest significance and importance. In the interregnum Charles ruled without a Parliament, laying up for himself, by his illegal exactions, principal amongst which was the historic Ship Money, a store of popular ill-will which was soon to overwhelm him with its force. The new Parliament, known in history as the Short Parliament, in contradistinction to its famous successor, immediately proceeded to the discussion of the popular grievances, taking up the thread where it was dropped eleven years before. This was the last thing that Charles wanted, and he therefore brought the sittings to an abrupt close by a dissolution within three weeks of the meeting. A Parliament, however, had now become a necessity to his existence. The exchequer was empty, the illegal imposts could no longer be relied on to furnish even moderate funds; and, meanwhile, the Scotch invasion had cast upon the King's Government an onerous burden of a kind which it was impossible to evade. All these circumstances tended to influence the King to resort yet once more to constitutional methods. The Parliament he summoned on



From an original drawing by A. D. McNamara.

A SCENE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

Strafford delivering up his sword on his impeachment for high treason.

November 3rd, 1640, was the great assembly which will be known to all time as the Long Parliament—"a Parliament which many, before that time, thought would never have had a beginning, and afterwards that it would never have had an end." Charles viewed its meeting with feelings of anxiety; and well he might, for there was a spirit abroad in the country which augured ill for its deliberations. Not many days intervened after the opening of the Parliament before striking proof was given of the stern determination of the popular representatives to compel retribution for past wrongs and ensure guarantees for future liberty. Its first action was to pass a bill enacting that the interval between Parliaments should never exceed three years. Next it declared the illegality of Ship Money, and annulled the judgment which in the interregnum had been passed against Hampden for non-payment of the impost. The Star Chamber and other unconstitutional tribunals inimical to the liberty of

the subject, too, went the most dramatic dispirit of Parliament against Strafford, the King, who had authority stink in the by his dragonings Meeting on November Commons proceeded question without un- Upon the dauntless vicious duty of taking he announced that he highest importance to and moved that the cleared of strangers, the keys placed on the delivered a long and denunciation of Strafford the impression pro- that the House decided ment. Forthwith the and Pym was sent House of Lords to tion come to. As- of the Peers' chamber, members of the "I do here, in the

now assembled in Parliament, and in the name of all the Commons of England, accuse Thomas, Earl of Strafford, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, of high treason; and they have commanded me further to desire your lordships that he may be sequestered from Parliament and forthwith committed to prison." Intensely dramatic in itself, the situation was made doubly impressive by the appearance upon the scene shortly afterwards of Strafford himself. It is stated that he entered the chamber while the Peers were deliberating upon the message delivered by Pym. "With a proud glooming countenance" he made for his place; but the Lords intervened and he was ordered to withdraw until he was summoned. Later he was called in and ordered to kneel and yield himself up a prisoner to Black Rod. He essayed to speak, but the Lords would not hear him; and delivering up his sword he went out of the chamber, "no man capping to him before whom that morning the greatest of England would have stood discovered." Charles, to his lasting dishonour, delivered up his lieutenant a sacrifice to the wolves. Strafford was executed on May 12th, 1641.



*From a copy of a painting by Van Dyck.*

THOMAS WENTWORTH, EARL OF STRAFFORD,

Minister of Charles I., whose policy of "Thorough" brought him to the scaffold.

by the board. But play of the remorseless was the action taken saturnine Minister of made the name of nostrils of the nation and his exactions. 11th, the House of to deal with the necessary preface. Pym devolved the initiative. Rising, had a matter of the lay before the House, House should be the doors locked and table. This done, he exciting harangue in ford. So great was duced by his oratory for instant impeach- doors were unlocked as messenger to the announce the resolu- assembling at the bar with many leading Commons, he said: name of the Commons



*From an original drawing by A. D. Melton, Esq.*

#### A MEMORABLE SCENE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

"Some waved their hats over their heads, and others took their swords out of their belts, seeing that the report was ground."

Meanwhile, the work of establishing barriers to withstand the encroachments of the Crown proceeded apace. A bill was passed and received the Royal assent enacting that Parliament should not be dissolved without the assent of the Commons. Following this came the drafting of the Grand Remonstrance, a narrative of popular grievances and a statement of public rights—"an appeal to the nation rather than an address to the Crown." A House worked to the highest state of tension gathered on November 23rd to discuss the pronouncement. Opinion was evenly divided as to the policy of some of the clauses, and so great was the heat engendered that it seemed at one time that there might be bloodshed. Lenthall, the Speaker, exercised a moderating influence. A little joke perpetrated on the occasion—we may assume to calm the assembly has become historic. In the course of the proceedings Mr. John Digby, member for Milborne Port, came in and seated himself upon the ladder by which members usually went up to the seats under the gallery. Observing him, the Speaker desired him to take his place and not to sit upon the ladder "as if he were going to be hanged."



From a painting by G. Arnold, made about 1803.

A VIEW OF THE PALACE AND ABBEY.

A comparison of this picture with that on page 14 will show the great changes in the river front.

According to the narrator, sombre as was the prevailing feeling, the House was greatly amused at this sally. The mirth, however, was transient. After the Remonstrance had been carried at one o'clock in the morning by the small majority of but eleven votes, a motion was made by Mr. George Palmer, a lawyer, in favour of the entering on the records of the names of those who protested, with a view to the determination of the question whether the right to protest existed in the House. Loud cries of "All! All!" burst from the benches upon which the King's party sat. "All! All!" says D'Ewes, "was cried from side to side; some waved their hats over their heads, and others took their swords in their scabbards out of their belts and held them by the pommels in their hands, setting the lower part on the ground; and, if God had not prevented it, there was very great danger that mischief might have been done." The members finally parted in peace, but it was with the feeling that the night's work was pregnant with mighty consequences for the nation. Cromwell declared that had the Remonstrance not been carried he would have sold out and left England the next morning.

The gulf between the King and the Commons was immeasurably widened by the passing



JOHN HAMPDEN,

The famous patriot whose resistance to payment of Ship Money was a landmark in the constitutional struggle preceding the Civil War.

Queen's apartments early, and finding Lady Carlisle with her, took her Majesty into her closet, and there having put to her all the hazards of the attempt and all its possible consequences, declared that he must abandon it. Whereat the Queen, no longer able to contain her passion, is said to have violently burst out, '*Allez, poltron! Go pull these rogues out by the ears, ou ne me revoyez jamais!*' Thus taunted, the King could but persist in his dangerous mission. So, gathering together two or three hundred soldiers, and attended by his nephew Charles, the Elector Palatine, he directed his way to Palace Yard. Warning had been conveyed to Pym by Lady Carlisle of the projected raid, and four of the five members marked out for vengeance—Pym, Hampden, Hazlerig, and Holles—had been packed off by boat to the City. The fifth, Strode, determined to remain and face the King, but he was eventually forced from the House by his friend, Sir Walter Earle, just as Charles's force was entering Palace Yard. Advancing through Westminster Hall, and leaving his soldiers there, Charles sent word that he was present. In response to his summons the door was immediately opened, and, accompanied by his nephew, he passed in, eagerly glancing as he walked up the floor at the place where Pym was accustomed to sit. Charles uncovered as he entered, and the House uncovered also. Approaching the chair, the King said to Lenthall, "By your leave, Mr. Speaker. I must borrow your chair a little." What followed is faithfully recorded in an account prepared by Rushworth, the clerk, from careful notes made at the time. "'Gentlemen,' said the King in halting sentences, 'I am sorry of this occasion of coming

of the Grand Remonstrance. It was becoming increasingly clear that only the arbitrament of arms could settle the issue. At this juncture Charles, with that strange capacity for always doing the wrong thing which distinguished him throughout his reign, resolved upon the foolish step of arresting the popular leaders. He was doubtless largely influenced on the occasion by the Queen, whose hatred of Parliament had become almost a disease. Sir William Coke has left behind him a curious account of the events of the period, which indicates the malign part her Majesty played in this scene of the Great Tragedy. From this it is to be gathered that an ineffectual attempt having been made on January 3rd to secure the arrest of one member of the House of Lords and five of the House of Commons, a long and warm debate ensued in the Royal chamber, as the result of which Charles resolved that he would himself demand the members the next morning. A night's reflection, however, brought him to a sense of the folly of the projected course. "He went to the



WILLIAM LENTHALL,

The well-known Speaker of the Long Parliament, who was in the chair when Charles I. demanded the surrender of the five members.



*From the picture by Copsey.*

#### A FAMOUS SCENE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Charles demanding the five members—Pym, Hampden, Hazlerig, Holles, and Strode.

unto you. Yesterday I sent a Sergeant-at-Arms upon a very important occasion to apprehend some that by my command were accused of high treason; whereunto I did expect obedience and not a message. And I must declare unto you here, that albeit no King that ever was in England shall be more careful of your privileges to maintain them to the uttermost of his power than I shall be; yet you must know that in cases of treason, no person hath a privilege. And, therefore, I am come to know if any of these persons that were accused are here.

"Then casting his eyes upon all the members in the House, he said: 'I do not see any of them: I think I should know them. For I must tell you, gentlemen, that so long as these persons that are accused (for no slight crime, but for treason) are here, I cannot expect that the House will be in the right way that I do heartily wish it. Therefore I am come to tell you, that I must have them wheresoever I find them.'

"Then his Majestic said: 'Is Mr. Pym here?' to which nobody gave answer. 'Well, since I see all my birds are flown, I do expect from you that you shall send them unto me as soon as they return hither. But I assure you, on the word of a King, I never did intend any force, but shall proceed against them in a legal and fair way, for I never meant any other. And now, since I see I cannot do what I came for, I think this no unfit occasion to repeat what I have said formerly, that whatsoever I have done in favour and to the good of my subjects, I do mean to maintain it.'"

The speech ended with a reiteration on the part of the King of his expectation that the unpunished members should be sent to him, and then, his eye lighting on the Speaker, he asked him whither they had gone. Falling on his knees, Lenthall answered in these memorable words: "I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as this House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here; and I humbly beg your Majesty's pardon that I cannot give any other answer than this to what your Majesty is pleased to command of me." Baffled at all points, the King strode out of the now excited House, the members the while crying out aloud, "so he might hear them," "Privilege! Privilege!"









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THE TRAIN-BANDS LEAVE LONDON.

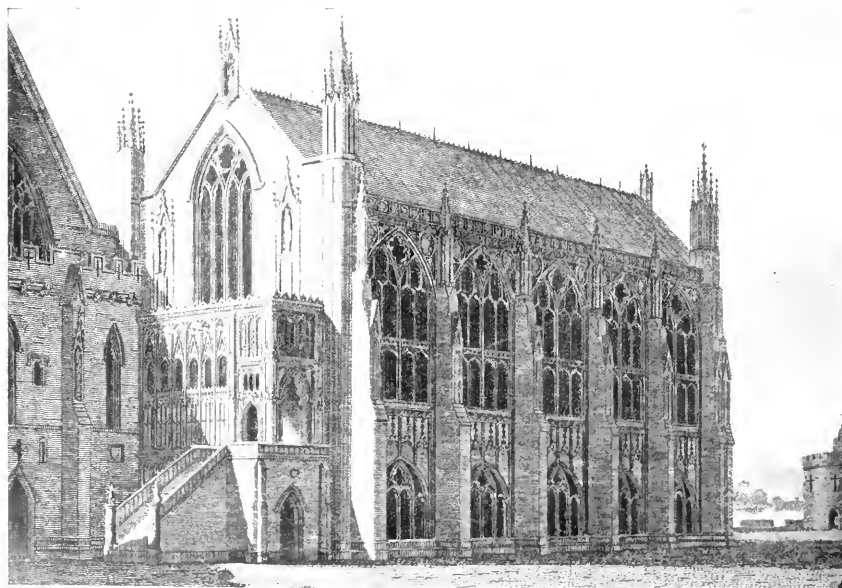
A fresco in the Peers' corridor depicting the setting out of the train-bands to raise the siege of Gloucester.

Thus terminated this perhaps the most moving, and in its consequences most momentous, episode that ever passed within the ancient walls of St. Stephen's Chapel. The accuracy to the smallest detail of the description given of it by Rushworth is beyond question. The indefatigable clerk took copious notes during the progress of the dramatic scene, and Charles's quick eye noting this, he sent for the report, and subsequently returned it to Rushworth with corrections.

The natural consequences of the King's arbitrary conduct followed quickly. A wave of indignation swept over the metropolis, which elevated the five members to the position of popular heroes. Safely protected in that "stronghold of liberty," the City, they were feted and caressed by the populace, while there were ominous manifestations of anger against the King. Still Charles was unable to read the signs of the times. With phenomenal obstinacy, he, on the morning after his abortive visit to St. Stephen's, proceeded to the City to secure if possible the persons of the five members. Again his intentions were frustrated by a sturdy determination to protect the upholders of constitutional liberty. Charles, chagrined and empty-handed, returned to Whitehall amid increasing murmurs of "Privilege! Privilege!" uttered by the citizens who thronged the streets. Convinced at last of the fatal error that he had committed, and apprehensive of the consequences, Charles on January 5th discreetly withdrew to Hampton Court, never to return to London again save as a prisoner. Meanwhile, the Commons, through the agency of a specially appointed Committee, which sat first at the Guildhall and later at the Grocers' Hall, had been actively occupied in concerting measures for effectively protecting its rights from further encroachments.

This body, in conjunction with the City authorities, made arrangements for the safe return of the five members to Westminster to resume their Parliamentary duties. The event took place on the morning after Charles's withdrawal, and it assumed the aspect of a triumphal progress. Escorted by the sheriffs and two thousand of the City trained bands and a vast body of citizens, the intrepid Commons were conducted to London Bridge, where they embarked with their escort on boats. As the imposing fleet moved up the river it was greeted with vociferous acclamations from the thickly lined shore. At Westminster the Speaker and leading members of the House received the party, while a body of four thousand Buckinghamshire yeomen massed in the background made an imposing guard of honour. Following this came excited debates in the House, with the adoption of strong measures to secure the inviolability of the Constitution. The floodgates of passion were now widely opened, and nothing could stem the torrent. Ineffectual efforts were made by the King's friends, who realised the temper that was abroad, to induce him to surrender to Parliament, at least for a time, some portion of his authority, especially over the Army. But the King was adamant. "Not for an hour," was his reply. Withdrawing to York, he made preparations for the inevitable conflict.

For the next five years the interest was transferred from the Council Chamber to the battlefield, where Cavalier and Roundhead fought for the mastery on each side with the tenacity of a stubborn race. Into the details of the bloody struggle it is unnecessary to enter. The proceedings at Westminster did not again assume a special importance until the closing period of the war, when Presbyterians and Independents contended for domination in the National Councils. That singular internecine strife was an aftermath of the war which seemed likely at one time to rend the Parliamentary party in twain and produce consequences as disastrous as those of the war itself. Cromwell's statesmanship and military genius, however, served in the long run to give a consistency, if not a unity, to the National Councils. The methods



ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL.

Exterior of the famous home of the House of Commons as it appeared in the eighteenth century.



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#### THE DEFENCE OF BASING HOUSE.

A fresco in the Peers' corridor illustrative of the memorable defence of Basing House by the Cavaliers against the Parliamentary Army.

adopted to suppress the Presbyterian party, which had secured control of the Parliamentary machinery, were as drastic as any that Charles had ever ventured upon. By a demonstration in force of the Parliamentary Army, in which the Independents were overwhelmingly strong, Denzil Holles and ten other leaders of the Presbyterian party were forced to withdraw themselves into exile, and the Commons were compelled to pass an Act dealing with the Militia on lines approved by the Army. A temporary reaction was caused by a counter-demonstration by the City apprentices, who invaded the Parliamentary precincts, and by sheer physical force compelled the distracted Senate to rescind their previous decisions. But the strength of Independent influence in the Army served to rectify this. Marching to London from Hounslow Heath, the great armed force reinstated in the chair Speaker Lenthall, who had been ejected in favour of Mr. Harry Pellham, a Presbyterian nominee, and by other measures asserted its power as well as its intention to direct the course of Parliament. Yet another effort was necessary, however, before the complete predominance of Independent views was assured. This was the historic ejection of malcontent Presbyterians known as "Pride's Purge," so called from the name of the colonel who directed the operation. In its flagrant disregard of all Parliamentary dignity and right the outrage was even grosser than that which Charles had perpetrated. Placing a regiment of horse about the House, and stationing a formidable force of foot in the lobby and precincts, Colonel Pride took up his position in the lobby with a list of members in his hand, and with Lord Grey by his side to aid in their identity. As the legislators passed out a body of about a hundred and fifty of them, all of the Presbyterian persuasion, were arrested. Included in the ranks of *détenus* was Mr. Prynne. This sturdy legislator did not

at all relish the purge. He demanded "by what authority and commission, and for what cause, they did thus violently seize on and pull him down from the House"; to which Pride replied by pointing to the armed soldiers standing round about him with swords, muskets, and matches lighted. Prynne then protested against his arrest as a high breach of the privileges of Parliament and an affront to the House, and he said that stir he would not of his own accord. Pride wasted no further time in argument. He pushed Prynne into the Queen's Court, where already were gathered a number of prisoners. Meanwhile, the House, hearing of the occurrence, sent out the Sergeant-at-Arms to demand the release of the imprisoned members. Pride, however, was not to be intimidated. When a second message had been brought, more urgent than the first, he gave orders for the detention of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and continued with his arrests. As soon as he had completed his full tale he sent some two-thirds of the party



*From an engraving in the picture by George Cuthwaite.*

"PRIDE'S PURGE."

The forcible expulsion of Presbyterian members from the House of Commons by Colonel Pride on December 6th, 1648.

about their business with injunctions never to show their faces again at St. Stephen's, and relegated the remainder to prison.

Pride's audacity accomplished its purpose. It was a Commons entirely amenable to the Army which now addressed itself to the question of the disposal of the King. On December 23rd the thinned House commenced its deliberations on this grave issue. The appointment of a Committee to draw up a charge and hear witnesses was followed, on January 2nd, 1649, by the passing of a resolution asserting that, "by the fundamental laws of this kingdom, it is treason in the King of England for the time being to levy war against the Parliament and King of England," and adding an ordinance "for erecting a High Court of Justice for the trying and judging Charles Stuart, King of England." The Lords declined to accept this ordinance; and, though there was a feeble effort to effect a compromise, the Commons were left in the end to conduct the impeachment alone, under circumstances which we shall describe in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S (continued)—THE COMMONWEALTH.

THE death of the King left the way clear to the establishment of the Commonwealth, towards which many of the keener spirits of the Parliamentary party had been working from the very outset of the Civil War. Even before the disappearance of the monarchy in the tragedy of Whitehall, the Commons had settled upon a new Great Seal of curious design. On one side was a map of England, Ireland, and the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, with the arms of England and Ireland. On the obverse side was a representation in bas-relief of the House of Commons sitting, with the motto: "In the first yeare of Freedome by Gods blessing restored, 1648." Apart from the historic importance which attaches to this relic, it is interesting as embodying one of the earliest authentic pictures of the House of Commons in action.

No room for doubt was left as to the spirit in which the new Government was to be conducted. Less than a week after Charles's execution—on February 6th, 1649—the Commons agreed to a resolution declaring that "the House of Peers in Parliament is useless, dangerous, and ought to be abolished"; and abolished it was—for the moment. Close upon this declaration came a denunciation of monarchy as a principle "unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous to the liberty, safety, and the public interest of the people of the nation." Legislative force was given to these sentiments, and it seemed that the country was to settle down peaceably to an era of ultra-democratic government. But the spirit of unrest was abroad, and for the next few years Cromwell was engaged in battling with influences inimical to the order which he had established. At length, wearied of the effort, and perceiving that his safety rested in his assumption of dictatorial powers, he decided upon the forcible suppression of the Long Parliament. The story of this famous *coup d'état* is in keeping with the whole of the history of this extraordinary period.

Cromwell was engaged in a consultation with the principal



THE GREAT SEAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH,  
As altered in 1651, showing the House of Commons sitting.



OLIVER CROMWELL.

One of the best portraits extant of the Lord Protector. It represents him at the age of fifty-eight, a year before his death.

sion; accusing them of an intention to perpetuate themselves in power, had they not been forced to the passing of this Act (the Act for the dissolution), which he affirmed they designed never to observe; and thereupon told them that the Lord had done with them, and had chosen other instruments for the carrying on of His work that were more worthy." A pause in his torrent of invective brought Sir Peter Wentworth to his feet with a reply couched in defiant language. He told Cromwell that "this was the first time he had ever heard such unbecoming language given to the Parliament, and that it was the more horrid in that it came from their servant, and their servant whom they had so highly trusted and obliged." He would have said more; but the General, stepping into the middle of the House, cried out: "Come! come! I will put an end to your prating." Then, "walking up and down the House like a madman and kicking the ground with his feet, he shouted, 'You are no Parliament: I say you are no Parliament; I will put an end to the sitting. Call them in! call them in!'" A file of soldiers entered, and the fifty-three members of which the House was composed were driven out with words of obloquy addressed to them individually by Cromwell. Turning then to the table and taking up the mace, he said, "What shall we do with this bauble? Here," he added, addressing one of the soldiers, "take it away." "After he had thus brought all into disorder," says Ludlow, "Major-General Harrison went to the Speaker (Lenthall) as he sat in the chair, and told him that, seeing things were reduced to this pass, it would not be convenient for him to remain there. The Speaker answered that he would not come down unless he were forced. 'Sir,' said Harrison, 'I will lend you my hand'; and thereupon, putting his hand within his, the Speaker came down." Cromwell finally, after seizing the records and snatching up the Act of Dissolution

officers of the Army and his friends at the Cockpit on April 20th, 1653, when news was brought by Colonel Ingoldsby that the Commons were on the point of passing an Act for their dissolution, which they had been discussing for some time. Immediately he put himself at the head of a posse of soldiery, and, marching down King Street, proceeded to the House of Commons. Quietly taking his seat in his accustomed place without interrupting the debate, he awaited developments. His opportunity came when the Speaker arose to put the question. Then, doffing his hat, he arose to address the House. Outwardly his manner was calm, but his speech betrayed the extreme irritation he felt. According to Ludlow, he overwhelmed the House "with the vilest reproaches, charging them not to have a heart to do anything for the public good; to have espoused the corrupt interest of Presbytery and the lawyers, who were the supporters of tyranny and oppres-





From an engraving of the picture by Benjamin D. L. P. R. A.

THE EXPULSION OF MEMBERS FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY GROWELL, ON APRIL 20TH, 1833.

"What shall we do with this bundle? Here, take it away."

that was ready to pass, put the documents under his cloak, commanded the doors of the House to be locked, and stalked out on his return to Whitehall. The next day some wag pasted on the locked door a paper with the inscription, "This house to be let, now unfurnished."

Exciting as the incident must have been—thrilling in its intensity—Scobell, the clerk, found it possible to indite a record of the proceedings in the Journal. He wrote: "20th April, 1653.—This day his Excellency the Lord General dissolved this Parliament." The faithful official's devotion to duty nearly cost him dear. Six years later, when the whirligig of time had brought by its revolutions the discredited Rump back to place, if not to power, he was haled to the Bar and called upon to explain how he came to put his pen to so gross a falsehood as that the Parliament had been dissolved. Scobell, with deep contrition, acknowledged his fault; but the offence was regarded as too grave to be lightly dismissed, and a Committee of Inquiry was appointed to consider what should be done with the over-conscientious clerk.

Distasteful as Parliaments had become to Cromwell, he, like his Royal predecessor, found it impossible to get on without them. After remaining locked for ten weeks, the doors of St. Stephen's Chapel were thrown open to accommodate an assembly of Cromwell's own selection, which is known in history as "the Little Parliament," or by the sobriquet given to it by Royalists, by reason of the quaint patronymic of one of its fanatical members, "the Praise-God Barebones Parliament." Soon the extravagances of this curiously assorted body gave the General reason to repent his action in bringing it into existence. Property, religion, law—all came within the range of its levelling and subversive decrees. Tithes were pronounced to be an institution which the Gospel had swept away, marriage was treated as purely a civil

contract, and the Court of Chancery was declared "a mystery of wickedness and a standing cheat," and abolished. At last a crisis was precipitated by the Parliament's meddlesome interference with the ark of the Covenant—the Army. The dispute led to the voluntary surrender by the Parliament of their powers into Cromwell's hands on December 12th, 1653, at Whitehall. With a show of reluctance Cromwell accepted the surrendered trust; but as only four days later he allowed himself to be installed with much pomp as Lord Protector in Westminster Hall, the absolute sincerity of his display of regret is open to considerable doubt.

In accordance with the terms of "the Instrument" which gave the colour of legality to his government, a Parliament was summoned to meet at Westminster on September 3rd, 1654. The assembly was opened in due form, a speech from the Protector delivered in the Painted Chamber taking the place of the customary speech from the throne. In this Cromwell spoke of the occasion as the greatest that England had ever seen, for to the Parliament were entrusted the destinies of three nations with the territories belonging to them. He concluded with the expression of a hope that the new House would put the finishing stone on the national fabric. The Protector's ardent aspirations were very far from being



QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA,

Consort of Charles I. and mother of Charles II. and James II.



"THIS HOUSE IS TO LET."

A contemporary satirical print descriptive of Cromwell's expulsion of the members from the House of Commons.

realised. Such were the tendencies of the Parliament that he was glad to be rid of it five months after its assembly. Another interregnum ensued, and then a fresh trial of constitutional methods was made in order the more effectively to carry on the war proceeding at the time with Spain. The new Parliament, which met on September 17th, was subjected to a careful preliminary process of sifting. In this way a body more to the taste of the Protector was secured. So completely, indeed, was it in sympathy with him, that after it had been sitting for a short time it decided to approach him with a proposal that he should assume the title of King. Cromwell, when the new scheme of government was first presented to him, gave an indecisive answer. A further representation from the Commons elicited from him, on May 8th, 1657, a final refusal. "His Highness," however, though not a King in name, became one in fact. Widely extended powers were conferred upon him under a scheme that Parliament had drawn up, and on June 26th, robed in purple and ermine, and with all the great officers of State about him, he took the oath of fealty to the new order. The creation of a House of Peers followed. "This," says Macaulay, "was the least happy of his contrivances, and displeased all parties. The Levellers were angry with him for creating a privileged class. The multitude, who felt respect and fondness for the great historical names of the land, laughed without restraint at a House of Lords in which lucky draymen and shoemakers were seated, to which few of the old nobles were invited, and from which almost all those old nobles who were invited turned disdainfully away. . . . His second House of Commons, though it recognised him as Protector, and would gladly have made him King, obstinately refused to acknowledge his new Lords. He had no course left but to dissolve the Parliament. 'God,' he exclaimed at parting, 'be judge between you and me.'"

With the close of this Parliament terminated Cromwell's essays in constitutional government. During the remaining short period of his life he ruled, as he was well able to do, without any other aid than that of his friendly advisers. The accession of his son Richard



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GENERAL MONK DECLARES FOR A FREE PARLIAMENT.

A fresco in the Commons' corridor showing Monk signing the declaration which paved the way for Charles II.'s return.

brought a new Parliament, elected on a wide franchise and invested with all the old powers, into existence. Its reign was short-lived. Assembling on January 27th, 1659, it met with a violent end on October 13th following. On that day, Major-General Lambert, the chief of the malecontent military party, by *force majeure* suppressed the sittings. His plan was very simple—simpler even than that of Cromwell. Stationing his forces about the Palace, he barred the approaches to the Parliament House to members. "Do you not know me?" said Speaker Lenthall to one of the guards who stopped his coach. "If you had been with us at Winnington Bridge," responded the soldier, "we should have known you." But St. Stephen's Chapel was not to remain long untenanted. On December 26th the Rump of the old Long Parliament was called together. It was a sorry apology for the popular assembly. Lenthall was again in the chair, lending what weight he might to its deliberations; but many of its most influential members held aloof, and those who attended lacked the cohesiveness which is essential to the authority of an assembly of the kind. As a convenient stopgap it, however, played a not inconsiderable part in the preliminary arrangements for the Restoration which followed upon Monk's declaration in favour of a Free Parliament; and when it expired by its own act, on April 25th, 1660, it did so in a certain odour of sanctity.

The Long Parliament will live as the most protracted and stirring in the whole course of English history. It existed in one form or another for nearly twenty years, the period covering the whole range of the tremendous struggle between Crown and people. Whatever may be thought of some of its actions, it will always deserve the respect and veneration of Englishmen as the instrument by which their constitutional liberties were won and the principles of government established on an enduring foundation.

## CHAPTER V.

### *MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S (continued)—THE RESTORATION AND THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.*

WITH the final disappearance of the Long Parliament terminates the period of absorbing and continuous dramatic interest in the Parliamentary history of the seventeenth century. An era was now entered upon which, though accompanied by some exciting episodes, was comparatively devoid of interest from a constitutional point of view. The Convention Parliament, which seated Charles II. on the throne, has a special importance of its own, which may be noted. This body assembled about a month before the King's return, the Lords by virtue of their own authority, and the Commons in pursuance of writs issued in the name of the keepers of the liberty of England, by authority of Parliament. "The said Parliament," observes Blackstone in his "Commentaries," "sat till December 29th, full seven months after the Restoration, and enacted many laws, several of which are still in force. But this was for the necessity of the King, which supersedes all law; for if they had not so met it was morally impossible that the kingdom should have been settled in peace. And the first thing done after the King's return was to pass an Act declaring this to be a good Parliament notwithstanding the defect of the King's writs. It was at that time a great doubt among lawyers whether even this healing Act made it a good Parliament, and held by very many in the negative, though it seems to have been too nice a scruple. And yet, out of abundant caution, it was thought necessary to confirm its Acts in the next Parliament, by Statute 13 Car. II. c. 7 and c. 14."

Charles II.'s first Parliament was in other and less reputable ways quite as great a constitutional curiosity as the Convention Parliament. It lasted from May 8th, 1661, to January 24th, 1679; and from the long period of its existence—eighteen years—was known as the Long Parliament, until that designation was allotted to the assembly of the Great Rebellion, to which it more properly applied. The name by which it is now recognised in history is the Pensionary Parliament—a term of opprobrium which has reference to the venality of its members, many of whom accepted allowances—pensions—not only from the King, but, what was a lower depth of infamy, from the King of France. Charles was in the habit of attending the debates in the Peers' chamber during this Parliament. He said that he found them as good as a play, and probably he did, for he so



BULSTRODE WHITELOCKE,

A famous member of the Long Parliament and an active supporter of the Commonwealth.



ANDREW MARVELL.

The poet, who, as member for Hull, was one of the list recipients of wages for services in Parliament. He was a sturdy opponent of the Court party in the reign of Charles II.

speech, told them that he did think he should have had occasion for them, but had none, and therefore did dismiss them to look after their own occasions until October." "Thus," adds the diarist, "they are dismissed again to their general great dislike. I believe the greatest that ever Parliament was to see themselves so fooled, and the nation in certain condition of ruin, while the King, they see, is only governed by his Court and women and rogues about him."

Parliament appears to have submitted meekly to this high-handed treatment, but there were some who were not prepared to condone the King's follies, public and personal. One of these was Sir John Coventry, who had the courage to stand up in the House and denounce the immoralities of the King, and at the same time to oppose the lavish grants of money by which his infamies were supported. This double offence brought down upon him the anger of the King, who decided upon a characteristically brutal revenge. "The Merry Monarch," according to Burnet, "sent some of his guards to watch in the street where Sir John lodged, to leave a mark on him." The bravoës "went thither, and as

contrived it that there should be no lack of animation. Bishop Burnet states that at first he sat decently on the throne, but becoming wearied of the restraint he would leave his seat and stand by the fire, an action which drew a crowd about him that broke all the decency of the House. The familiarity of the King with Parliament engendered, as it was calculated to do, contempt. This quality peeped out in many ways, but most conspicuously in his audacious "fooling" of the assembly, as old Pepys calls it, in 1667.

Summoned to meet on July 25th, the most awkward period of the year for men whose interests were almost purely agricultural, members trooped to Westminster in expectation of having important business to transact. But when the King found that they were intent on exploiting grievances they had against him, on the plea of being prevented from attending by important business, he directed them to adjourn for four days.

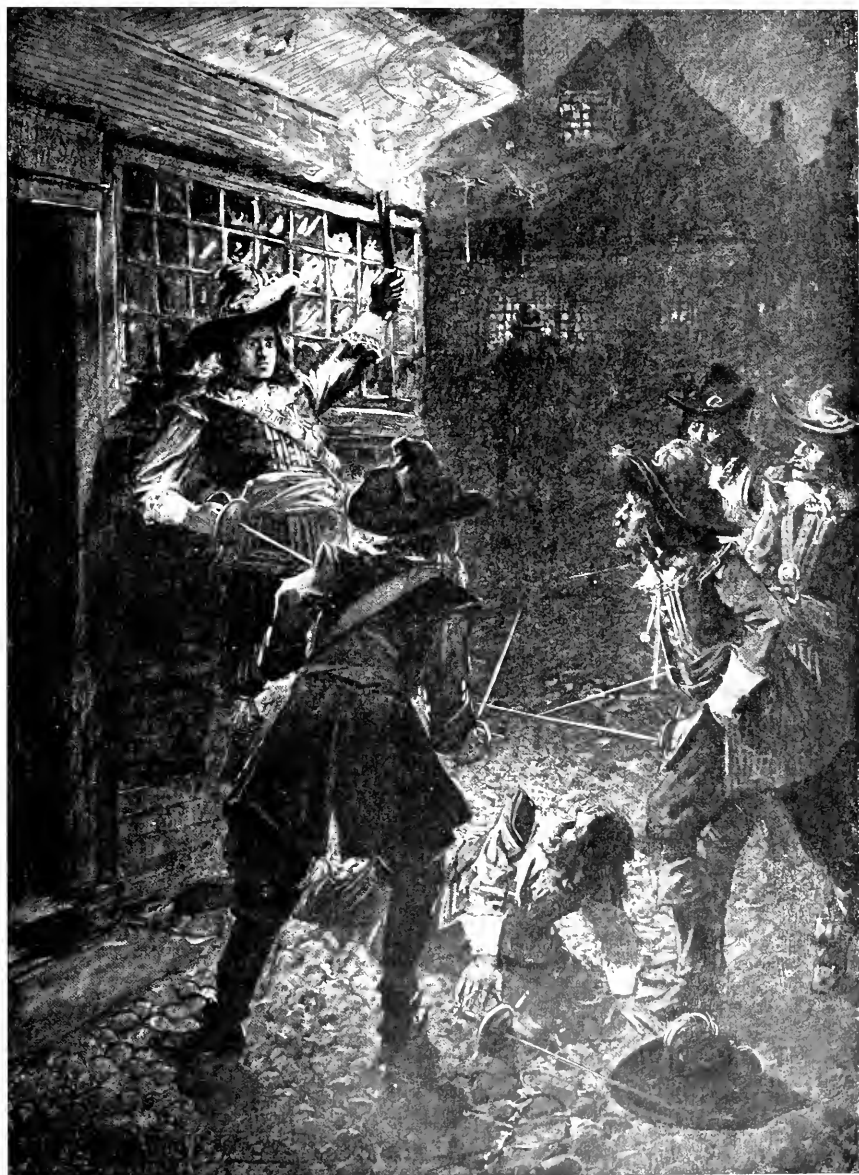
On the reassembling of the Houses at the time appointed, greatly to their astonishment "the King, having made a very short and no pleasing



Painted by Sir Peter Lely.

GEORGE VILLIERS, SECOND DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM,  
Courtier and companion of Charles II.

"A man so various that he seem'd to be  
Not one, but all mankind's epitome."



*Frontispiece to "The*

*Attack on Sir John's*

*Made at the instigation of the*



SIR JOHN COVENTRY.

A conspicuous member of Charles II.'s Parliaments.

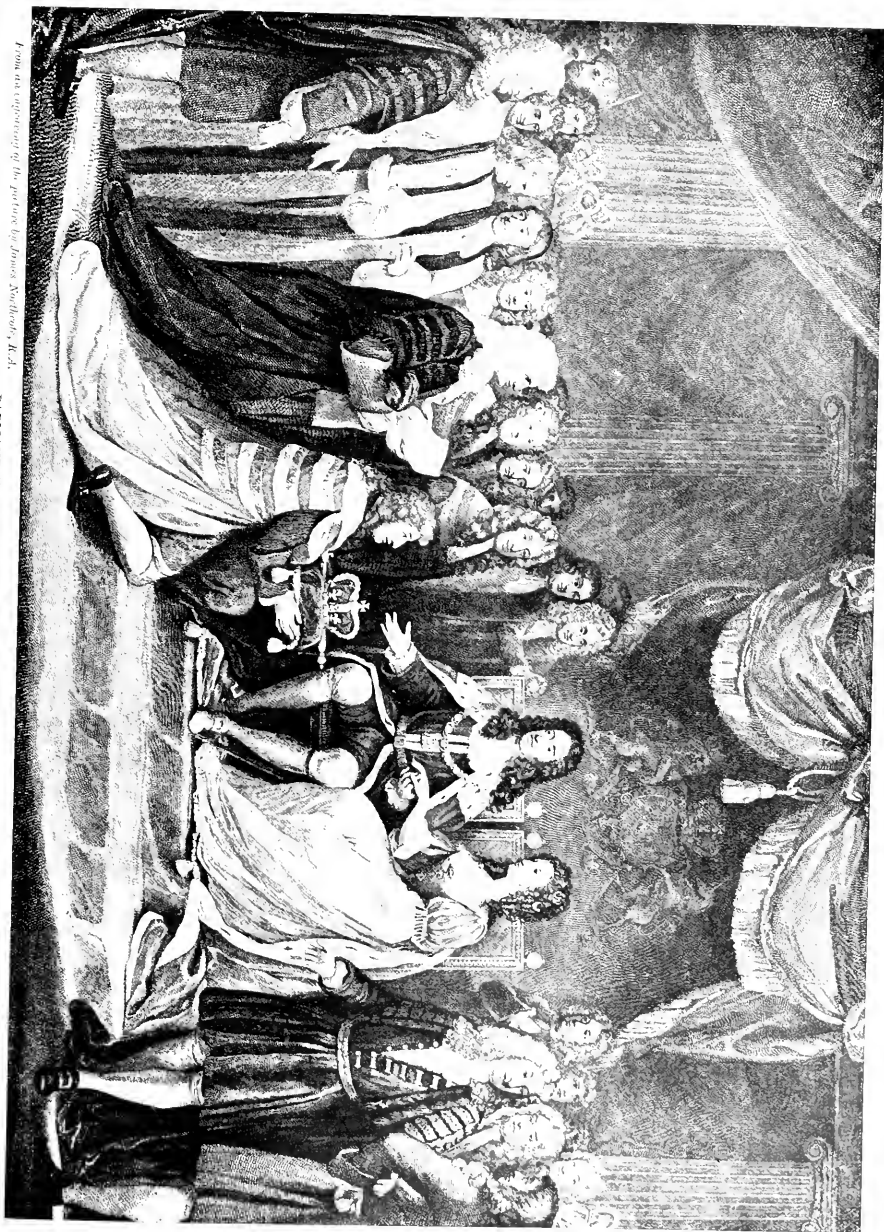
Coventry was going home they drew about him. He stood up to the wall, and drew the flambeau out of his servant's hand, and with it in the one hand and his sword in the other, he defended himself so well that he got more credit by it than by all the actions of his life. He wounded some of them, but was disarmed, and then they cut his nose to the bone. The affair was managed under the orders of the Duke of Monmouth, to whose house the ruffians repaired after performing their task." A bill decreeing the banishment of the perpetrators of the outrage was passed, but of course the instigators of the vile business escaped unpunished.

In keeping with the character of this outrage outside the House was a violent scene which occurred within the House of Commons on May 10th, 1675. The episode arose out of some confusion as to the result of a motion in Committee of Supply respecting the English regiments in the French army, which was a burning topic of that day. The tellers on reaching the table differed in their reports as to the figures. Thereupon there were

shouts of "Tell again," with opposing shouts of "Report." Tremendous disorder ensued; leading members jumped upon the table, and their followers crowded about them with gestures and loud cries of defiance. There was a particularly violent altercation between Lord Cavendish and Sir John Hammer. It was alleged by some that the feeling between the two ran so high that the former spat in the latter's face. While there is some doubt as to this, it is an indisputable fact that there was something very near a free fight. When the tumult had continued about half an hour, the Speaker, who of course was not presiding at the time, entered of his own accord, and making his way at a slow pace up the floor, took the chair. His presence and influence had the effect of restoring order; members gradually resumed their seats, and a little later those most prominent in the *fracas* were induced to get up in their places and declare that they would not allow their resentment at what had passed to be carried outside the chamber.

Corrupt and venal as this Parliament was at one period, it eventually became a sharp thorn in Charles's side. It set itself steadily to oppose the pretensions of the Crown, and took up a strong line on ecclesiastical questions antagonistic to that held by the King. What was, perhaps, an even greater sin in Charles's eyes, it maintained a tight hold on the purse-strings. In 1677 the relations between the King and Commons were particularly strained. The quarrel was over the King's foreign alliances, which Parliament, not without reason, regarded with grave suspicion. Charles, furious at the representations of the Commons on the subject, decided to dissolve Parliament. When, on May 28th, the decision was announced, there was an extraordinary scene in the popular chamber. The Speaker, having adjourned the House to July 16th, without naming place or hour, suddenly left the chair. There were cries that he should come back, and an unseemly struggle took place for the possession of the mace; but the Speaker's party were too powerful, and he got away in regular form with the mace borne before him, followed, however, by reproachful cries. The Parliament lingered on for some little time after this, a constant and growing source of irritation to the King. Its activities were finally cut short by its dissolution on January 24th, 1679.





*From an engraving by the painter by James Kneller, R.A.*

# **PARLIAMENT OFFERING THE CROWN TO WILLIAM AND MARY.**

The historical scene in the Banqueting Hall, Whitehall on February 1<sup>st</sup> 1633. "The King, holding the Queen's hand, and it was a great time, which he would fulfil faithfully" (contemporary letter).



SIR JOHN TREVOR.

The "corrupt Speaker," expelled from the chair for accepting a bribe.

indulgence. The bogs of Ireland at the same time afforded a refuge to Popish outlaws, much resembling those who were afterwards known as Whiteboys. These men were then called Tories. The name of Tory was therefore given to Englishmen who refused to concur in excluding a Roman Catholic from the throne."

It is to the party system thus organised that may be attributed the strong stand made in James II.'s reign against the infractions of the popular liberties, and the bloodless Revolution of 1688. This great movement, which firmly seated a new dynasty on the throne, required the creation of a second Convention Parliament. Brought into existence as the result of a conference of peers held at the City Guildhall immediately after James's ignominious flight, this assembly met at Westminster on January 22nd, 1689, and sat with the usual forms of a Parliament, minus, of course, a Royal speech. It settled the preliminaries for the new reign and for the immediate carrying on of the government, and then passed on to the consideration of the Declaration of Rights—that great charter on which the modern government of this country is based. The Declaration was agreed to with praiseworthy celerity, and its terms were subsequently embodied in a measure known as the Bill of Rights. The last act in the drama was the formal offering of the Crown to William and Mary in the Banqueting House, Whitehall (now the United Service Museum), on February 13th, 1689. The Convention Assembly's work did not end with this historic event. A week later it formally declared itself a Parliament, and as such transacted business until January 27th, 1690, when it was dissolved.

The Parliamentary history of the remaining years of the seventeenth century contains little that is of special importance from our standpoint. The one incident of dramatic interest was the ejection of Sir John Trevor, the Speaker, from the chair for corruption. This shameful business we shall leave for treatment to a subsequent chapter. Meanwhile, it will be sufficient to say that it supplies a not unfitting finale to an era in Parliamentary government in which venality was a recognised principle of administration, and in which the honour of the Crown itself was involved by sordid relations with foreign powers.

Charles's later Parliaments are remarkable for the adoption of the terms Whig and Tory as distinctive party names. Macaulay, who gives 1679 as the year in which the nicknames were first used, notes as a curious circumstance that one of them has a Scotch and the other an Irish origin. "Both in Scotland and in Ireland misgovernment had called into existence bands of desperate men, whose ferocity was heightened by religious enthusiasm. In Scotland some of the persecuted Covenanters, driven mad by oppression, had lately murdered the Primate, had taken up arms against the Government, had obtained some advantages against the King's forces, and had not been put down until Monmouth, at the head of some troops from England, had routed them at Bothwell Bridge. These zealots were most numerous amongst the rustics of the Western lowlands, who were vulgarly called Whigs. Thus the appellation of Whig was fastened on the Presbyterian zealots of Scotland, and was transferred to those English politicians who showed a disposition to oppose the Court and to treat Protestant Nonconformists with

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SPEAKER AS HOST—PARLIAMENTARY COSTUME.

It may not be unprofitable or without interest, before taking up the thread of our narrative, to step outside the strenuous political arena at St. Stephen's to examine some of the lighter phases of Parliamentary life. We have seen how the old-time Parliament man comported himself on the public stage in times of stress and peril. Let us now endeavour to discover what were his habits and actions when away from the blaze of the footlights.



THE STATE BED IN THE SPEAKER'S HOUSE.

Which a Royal guest would probably occupy if he wished to sleep at the Palace of Westminster, as George IV. did the night before his coronation.

At the head of the social as well as the political system of the House of Commons is the Speaker. He occupies the position not only by virtue of his office, but by the force of the sanction which is given by the arrangements made by Parliament for his convenience and comfort. A superb suite of sumptuously furnished rooms forms the official residence of the Speaker. The oak panellings, the carved stonework, and the mullions and tracery of the Gothic windows, all accord admirably with the traditions which cluster around the Chair. One feels, in passing through these ornate apartments, that they embody something of the spirit of respect and almost of reverence which the British people feel for the president of the popular chamber. Nor is the sentiment without justification. To receive an invitation to a Speaker's reception is a cherished ambition of every young member. The appearance of that member's name in the dinner list gives him a *cachet* at Westminster which hardly anything else of the kind could confer. Full social recognition, in fact, is to the budding legislator what presentation at Court is to the aspiring young damsel.

The dinners themselves are no ordinary functions. As everything is done by rule in the House of Commons, so are there immutable regulations, sumptuary and otherwise, for these entertainments. Uniform or Court dress is indispensable. Many and ingenious have been the attempts to escape the operation of the rule; but never with success. The only relaxation which has been

made, at all events in recent years, was during the short Parliament of 1885, when, as there were a dozen Labour members in the House, and they were sufficient of themselves to form a dinner party, the late Speaker (Lord Peel), with characteristic kindness of heart, invited them in a body to dine with him, and to wear whatever costume they pleased. But this was quite an informal gathering, and does not properly enter into the account. As a rule, it must be confessed, the restrictive stipulations have not proved an insuperable bar to the enjoyment of the Speaker's hospitality, even on the part of the most pronounced Democrats. The tradition still lingers in Parliamentary circles of how the late Mr. Biggar figured at one of Mr. Peel's dinner parties in all the glory of Court raiment, and of how, after faring sumptuously and exchanging confidences with some of the most distinguished guests, he threw a cloak around his spare form and, marching over Westminster Bridge, mounted a tram car and so proceeded to his humble home at Clapham. Though in essence formal functions, the dinners are by no means dull. There is only one toast—"The King"—and there is plenty of time for conversation. When the guests

are well matched, as they invariably are, thanks to the tact of the Speaker's secretary, the talk is interesting, and the friendly interchange of views which there takes place, it is not too much to say, has laid the foundations of many strong friendships.

The origin of the Speaker's dinners and receptions affords an interesting subject of speculation. Probably they do not date much beyond the end of the eighteenth century, when Mr. Addington (afterwards Lord Sidmouth) had a set of apartments, including the Crypt Chapel, placed at his disposal for residential purposes. There was, no doubt, a Speaker's residence before that time, but it could not have been large, and any entertaining done in it must have been on a modest scale. However that may be, it is not until we get almost to the dawn of the last century that we find any record of the formal hospitality now so common. One of the earliest authentic records of it is contained in a tiny little book in the possession of Lord Peel, which escaped the fate of so many of the less important archives of the House on the occasion of the fire. This volume, no bigger than a housekeeper's account-book and quite as unpretentious in appearance, sets forth in faded characters those who dined at the Speaker's table in the year 1800. The dinners then were held weekly, usually on Saturday but occasionally on Sunday, at what we should deem the unearthly hour of half-past five (the present hour is eight); and, as we state elsewhere, the trysting-place was the Crypt Chapel, or rather a portion of it divided from the rest for dining purposes. Here, according to the record, all the great men who then assisted in the making of English history assembled repeatedly during the



SPEAKER ADDINGTON (AFTERWARDS LORD SIDMOUTH).  
During whose term of office the Speaker's residence was greatly enlarged.

session. On the very first page are the names of Pitt, Dundas, and Grenville as diners on February 1st; and turning overleaf we find that the guests on the following Saturday included Fox, Sheridan, Lord John Russell, Coke, and Erskine. Another party a week or two later brought Pitt, Lord Castlereagh, Dundas, Pelham, and Addington together; and diving at random into the pages we find such familiar names as Palmerston, Whitbread, Windham, Wilberforce, and Townshend frequently occurring. Those long past dinner parties, we may imagine, were no sedate formal gatherings. With two such *convives* at the board as Sheridan and Fox, the talk must have drifted into familiar channels, and as the bottle circulated so no doubt also did the good stories.

Lord Colchester has left us in his *Diary* a full and entertaining account of a Speaker's dinner which he attended about that period—to be precise, on February 2nd, 1796. On the occasion twenty sat down to dinner "in a vaulted room under the House of Commons, looking towards the river." The guests were served on plate bearing the King's arms by "three gentlemen out of livery and four men in full liveries and bags." All the party wore full dress. "The style of the dinner was soup at the top and bottom, changed for fish, and afterwards changed for roast saddle of mutton and roast loin of veal. The middle of the table was filled with a painted plateau, ornamented with French white figures and vases of flowers. Along each side were five dishes, the middle centres being a ham and boiled chicken. The centre course had a pig at top, a capon at bottom, and the two centre middles were turkey and a larded guinea fowl. The other dishes were puddings, pies, puffs, blanchmanges, etc. The wine at the corners was in ice pails during the dinner—Burgundy, Champagne, Hock, and Hermitage." Lord Colchester adds that only one toast was given—"The King"—and that the company after partaking of coffee and tea broke up at nine o'clock.

From this description it may be gathered that, excepting in a gastronomic sense, the functions have not greatly changed in the course of the century that has elapsed since the above entry was written. It would, perhaps, be strange if they had, for he would be a bold Speaker who would dare to introduce any striking innovations in social customs, which, though based on no written authority, are as sacred as the procedure of the House.

A chapter dealing with the hospitality dispensed by the official head of the popular branch of the Legislature affords an appropriate opening for a reference to the by no means uninteresting question of the dress and equipment of members. Costume plays, and it has ever played, an important part in the life of Parliament. If we regard the term in its wider sense, we find that it has left a trail on the orders of the House of Commons which is traceable through

the centuries to the present day. At one time it is swords that are the subject of regulation; at another, spurs. Again, it is hats, or it may be gloves. Even the serious work of the House is affected by the personal equipment of a member. Unless he wears his hat in certain circumstances he is not in order and cannot be heard; in other conditions, if he is not bareheaded he is



THE SPEAKER'S STATE COACH,

Last used when the members of the House of Commons waited on the late Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace in 1857. Its exact weight is 2½ tons.

equally at fault, and will inevitably be called to account by the Chair. In fact, from the moment the member goes down to Westminster until he quits the legislative precincts, he is continually having brought to his mind the philosophy of clothes as exemplified in Parliamentary traditions and practice.

In the earliest times, when the regular sittings of Parliament were much more formal and spectacular than they are at the present day, the dress of members had largely an official character. As is shown in the quaint old painting of Parliament in Edward I.'s time to which reference has previously been made, the whole assembly wore the robes of their respective orders. Possibly this may have been an exceptional sitting, either at the opening or close of a Parliament. But from the fact that the King in those days personally presided at the joint sitting of the two Houses, it may be assumed with a fair degree of safety that the custom of robing was habitually observed. In later times, when the two



THE SPEAKER'S LIBRARY.

The room is a continuation of the stately suite of apartments which comprise the House of Commons Library.

branches of the Legislature had separated, a less formal system doubtless obtained, and the dress of members was not in any material degree different from that of people in the ordinary walks of life.

Arms seem to have been universally worn from the earliest period. Occasionally badges were donned with the lethal weapons, to indicate the partisan sympathies of the wearers. Thus a Parliament of the reign of Edward II. came to be known as the "Parliament de la Bond" from the circumstance that the Barons wore coloured bands upon their sleeves as a demonstration of their united antagonism to the two Spencers. Another Parliament—that of the fourth year of the reign of Henry VI.—was nicknamed the "Parliament of Bats" because its members, being prohibited from wearing swords, equipped themselves with long wooden staves. The custom of wearing swords was a dangerous one when party feeling ran high and hot words were exchanged across the floor. Following the passing of the Great Remonstrance in 1641, there was, as already noted, an exciting scene in which members would have "caught at each other's locks," and "sheathed their swords in each other's bowels," but for Hampden's timely intervention. Isolated encounters arising out of the habit of carrying arms were



*The present Speaker of the House of Commons*

THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM COURT GULLY.

The present Speaker of the House of Commons



MRS. GULLY IN HER BOUDOIR, WITH HER PRIVATE SECRETARY

not uncommon. They led eventually to the rigorous exclusion of the sword from the Legislative Chamber by the order of the House. Before this occurred, the Speaker had been endowed by the House with special authority to suppress duelling with a stern hand. On January 31st, 1641, in consequence, no doubt, of the increasing acrimony of the debates, an order was passed "that the Speaker shall have a warrant to apprehend and stay such members of this House as he shall be informed do either send challenges or receive or entertain challenges." A little more than four years later—on April 28th, 1645—a further and more wide-reaching rule was passed. It was to the effect "that

if any quarrel happen between any gentlemen or others, in any place within the cities of London and Westminster and the lines of communication (the House not sitting), that upon information thereof to Mr. Speaker, he shall have power to send for the parties and secure their persons till the House be acquainted with it, and take further order." That this authority



MR. EDWARD GULLY, THE SPEAKER'S SECRETARY,  
Who acts as intermediary between the Speaker and members.

to the Speaker to act the rôle of peacemaker was exercised from time to time there is ample evidence to show. The most conspicuous instance of his intervention is supplied by the incident of the quarrel between Lord Cavendish and Sir John Hanmer over the result of a division, an account of which has been given in an earlier chapter. On that occasion Lenthall extracted from each of the leading parties in the *fracas* a promise that the quarrel should not be carried outside.

Before the Stuart period, during which this lively episode occurred, the House had witnessed some curious developments in costume. By no means the least striking was that which was introduced in the reign of Henry VIII. The petticoat robes of Plantagenet times had just been expelled, and the trouser as an article of everyday costume had made its appearance. The new garment as then worn was a fearful and wonderful article. It took the form in most cases of trunk breeches of enormous size, the artificial distension being secured by stuffing the interior with wool, tow, hair, or anything that came handy. So cumbersome were they that special arrangements had to be made to relieve the wearers of the burden when indoors. In the Harleian MS. it is stated that "over the seats in the Parliament House were holes two inches square in the wall, in which were posts supporting



MISS SHELLEY GULLY,  
Who ably assists Mrs. Gully in her social duties.



a scaffold round the rooms for the use of those who wore great breeches stuffed with hair like woollacks." The scaffolds, it is added, continued until the reign of Elizabeth, when they were taken down, the fashion having then gone out. In connection with these extraordinary articles of attire, Holinshed relates an amusing story: "A prisoner appearing before a judge to answer an accusation against him at the time that the law prohibited wearing base stuffed into the breeches, was told that he wore his breeches contrary to the law. He began to excuse himself of the offence, and endeavouring by little and little to discharge himself of that which he did wear within them, he drew out of his breeches a pair of sheets, two tablecloths, ten napkins, four shirts, a brush, a glass, and a comb, night-caps and other things of use, saying, 'Your Highness may understand that because I have no safer a storehouse, these pockets do serve me for room to lay up my goods in, and though it be a straight prison,



THE SPEAKER'S STATE DINING-ROOM.

As it appeared before one of the Speaker's Parliamentary full-dress dinners.

yet it is a storehouse big enough for them, for I have many things more of value yet within it." With a laugh the judge dismissed the prisoner, only stipulating that he should restock his storehouse with the articles with which he strewed the Court.

The gargantuan trunk breeches and the exaggerated ruffs and furbelows gave place to a quieter style of costume. Puritanism, which was then making itself felt, was opposed to the fripperies of the beaus of Elizabeth's Court. It even looked askance at spurs, for we find it recorded by D'Ewes that on a certain day in the thirty-ninth year of the Virgin Queen's reign, the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the day "admonished that none should enter with their spurs, not to offend others." Subsequently action was taken from the Chair relative to the practice. "Mr. Speaker showed to the House that some particular members found themselves aggrieved that the ancient order for putting off their spurs before they came into the Parliament House was not observed, which he prayed might be done." Others, it is

further stated, suggested that boots and rapiers should be taken away, "but nothing was done thereon." The prohibition against the wearing of spurs continued for many years, but in process of time it became rather a tradition than a decree. How it was read towards the close of the eighteenth century is shown by the following extract from Lord Colchester's Diary: "March 18th, 1796.—No business in House of Commons; but Popham, an old M.P., represented to me that I was disorderly in wearing my spurs in the House, as none but country members were entitled to that privilege."

So far as clothing was concerned, the House in the Stuart period came to be divided much as it was on political matters. The stern, unbending Parliamentarians adopted a plain, severe form of attire—a long cloak, with the sugarloaf hat and top boots. In striking contrast to them were the adherents of the Court, who wore long curls flowing gracefully from under a plumed hat, and whose cloak served rather to accentuate than to conceal the richly embroidered vests which were a characteristic part of their costume. Sir Philip Warwick, describing Cromwell's



THE RED DRAWING-ROOM IN THE SPEAKERS' HOUSE,  
So called from the colour of the decorations.

first entrance into the House, shows very clearly the distinction between the two parties in this matter. "I came one morning into the House well clad," he says, "and perceived a gentleman speaking whom I knew not, very ordinarily apparelled, for it was a plain cloth suit, which seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor. His linen was plain and not very clean; and I remember a speck or two of blood upon his little hand which was not much larger than his collar. His hat was without a hatband, his sword stuck close to his side, his countenance swollen and reddish, his voice sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervour." During the Commonwealth, this plainness of costume noted in the case of Cromwell on his first appearance at St. Stephen's became the rule. A solemn, sober-garbed assembly gathered during those eventful years to do the nation's business in the peculiar style which marked the period. On the Restoration there was a reaction from the rigid suppression of the Puritanical *régime* in the House of Commons, as elsewhere in the country. Legislators blossomed forth into the gayest of beaus and fops. Long hair, embroidered vests, laced ruffles, and perfumed handkerchiefs were everywhere in evidence. Never had the dull old interior of St. Stephen's



ELWES, THE MISER.

A wealthy member of Parliament noted for his penurious habits.

The eighteenth century ushered in a new sartorial era in Parliament. The prevailing note was a stiff formalism. Full dress was the rule, and those who had orders habitually wore them. Walpole invariably addressed the House with the broad blue riband of the Garter conspicuous across his breast. The elder Pitt never failed to appear in dress coat and tie wig, as if prepared for a levee. Lord North was also a great stickler for the proprieties in dress, and, in allusion to his Garter, was most frequently referred to as "the noble lord with the blue riband." The scene at all times was one of much brilliancy; but it had an added touch of splendour on the night of a great debate, when the benches were full. Then the glitter of stars and the challenging colours of the ribands of the Orders of the Garter and the Bath, with the eager, animated faces on the back benches appearing from under the grey powdered wigs, which were universally worn, gave a distinction to the assembly which it cannot lay claim to in these times of levelling broadcloth and ostentatious contempt for display in the everyday affairs of life.

While the general character of the eighteenth-century Parliaments was a dignified splendour of attire, there were exceptions to the rule of smart dressing. One of these was John Elwes, the miser, who sat in three successive Parliaments for Berkshire. Elwes was a character of his day. Though his income was many thousands a year, he would hang about Palace Yard in the hope that some brother member would give him a lift home, and when he arrived there he would often turn into bed after a frugal meal to save light and firing. His costume was in keeping with these penurious habits. He is said by his biographer to "have nearly reached that happy climax of poverty which has more than once drawn to him the compassion of those who passed him in the street." The only concession he made to his dignity as a member was to keep a special suit for the Speaker's dinners and for other social gatherings. In the course of the session the Speaker and the political leaders became well acquainted with this costume, and the joke went round that no one had a right to take offence at Elwes, "as he had the same *habit* with everybody." In the House on one occasion an accident happened to the old man which was a standing Parliamentary joke for years afterwards. "Elwes," says Harford, "wore a wig; it looked as if it might have been picked off a hedge or a scarecrow. At that time we used to wear dress swords occasionally at the House: for instance, if going to the opera. One day Bankes, whose carriage is stiff and lofty, had on

his sword and was seated next to Elwes, who leant his head forward just as Banks was rising up to leave his place, when the hilt of his sword came in contact with Elwes's wig, which it whisked off and bore away. The House was instantly in a roar of laughter. I never shall forget the scene. There was old Elwes without his wig, darting forward to reclaim it, and Banks marching on quite unconscious of the sword knot which he wore, and wondering what the laugh was about."

The advent of the nineteenth century saw the end of the old grand style in Parliamentary costume. Gradually the knee-breeches, the wigs, the silk stockings, the silver buckles, and the dazzling ribands gave place to the sober and unpretentious garb of modern life. What there was of daily display took the form of bright ties, bottle-green waistcoats, and other affectations

of the Dandy Era. These lingered on beyond the period when the men of the Young England coterie had outgrown their little weaknesses. But they were faint reminiscences of departed glories. The old spirit is only truly revived, and that transiently, at the beginning of a session, when the members for the City of London, in accordance with immemorial usage, take their seats on the Treasury Bench, and the mover



FROM ONE HOUSE TO ANOTHER.

Walpole passing from the House of Commons to the House of Lords. In the background appears a case with, above it, the words "Dent's Snuff Shop."

and the seconder of the Address, attired in uniform, make pleasant oases of colour in a desert of black broadcloth.

But if the taste for fine clothes has waned in Parliament, our legislators have diminished nothing in their deference for the rules, written and unwritten, which, as we have already indicated, affect headgear. The hat, indeed, has been elevated almost into a parliamentary fetic. Without the aid of a hat a member cannot properly reserve his seat, though lenient Speakers have on some occasions sanctioned the use of gloves for this purpose. A hat, again, must be worn if a member speaks to a point of order during a division; but he must beware of keeping it on while a message from the Throne is being read, or when he is entering or leaving the Legislative Chamber. For a member to go uncovered habitually, however, is a heinous offence against etiquette. By usage, the only persons who are allowed to leave their hats in the cloak-room are the Whips. The bare head in their case is the outward and visible sign of the office they fill.

Before quitting the subject of costume, a few words may perhaps be said about an old habit once widely prevalent at St. Stephen's, as in general society—that of snuff-taking. The snuff-box was at once the sign of good-breeding and the mark of good-fellowship. It was carried as the cigarette-case is to-day, and was even more in evidence in the legislative precincts than is that adjunct of modern civilisation. In an old engraving showing Walpole's passage from the House of Commons to the House of Lords he is represented as passing through a chamber by the walls of which is a glazed cupboard containing tins of snuff. It was apparently the stock-in-trade of some enterprising salesman who had gained access to the House, as it was easy enough to do in those days with a little interest. In more recent times a generous Legislature used to indulge its gentled weakness at the national expense, and in the Estimates every year was an allowance for snuff for the use of members.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *SOCIAL ASPECTS OF PARLIAMENTARY LIFE—WINING AND DINING.*

A SUBJECT of much interest for the historical investigator is the rise of what is known as the Kitchen Department of the House of Commons. In our backward glance into the past, we feel anxious to know something of the inner life of the legislator at old St. Stephen's. How were his needs and his comforts ministered to? How grew up that social life which now plays so prominent, and in some eyes so important, a part in the proceedings of the nation's representatives at Westminster? In a sentence: How did the House of Commons become "the best club in London"?

When we essay to answer these questions, we are confronted with a lamentable paucity

of material. Antiquarian writers and annalists tell us, with great wealth of detail, the story of St. Stephen's in its architectural, its historical, and its political aspects. But they are for the most part silent as to the everyday life of the place. It is only by piecing together the casual statements of gossiping writers, and unearthing an occasional fact from old official documents, that we are able to form a picture of life at Westminster no farther back than a century ago. We probably shall not be wrong in assuming that the absence of information is explained by the prosaic fact that there is really no story to tell. It has to be remembered that there is a vast gulf between the social and domestic customs of to-day and those of our ancestors in Tudor, Stuart, and even Georgian times. Now we turn night into day. Our forbears reversed the custom, and began the day in the middle of the night. The dinner-hour was in the forenoon, and rarely, if ever, later than midday. It is recorded that when Charles II. proceeded from the Tower to Westminster on the day of his coronation, he "dined" in the early forenoon. This,



WINE CELLARS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

In which are stocked the supplies purchased by the Kitchen Committee. Usually there is wine to the value of several thousand pounds in the vaults.

doubtless, was an exceptional case of early dining, and as the meal was followed by the banquet in Westminster Hall later in the day, the phrase may be regarded as implying, not the English dinner, but the French *déjeuner*, to which Charles's stay abroad had, we may take it, made him partial. Leaving, however, this incident out of the question, there is ample evidence to show that at that period the fashionable hour for dinner was about the time that our modern legislators, if they are specially early risers, are getting out of bed.

The hour of meeting of the House of Commons was fixed to suit this habit of early rising. It was once as early as seven o'clock in the morning. Towards Stuart times the practice became fixed of a meeting lasting from eight until twelve o'clock. At the latter hour the member was free, unless his attendance was required on a Committee, when he had to look in again for a short time in the afternoon.

With such arrangements as those obtaining, there was no opportunity for social relaxation within the precincts, and no need for the elaborate machinery which is now in operation to minister to the creature needs of the members. What refreshment was required was doubtless obtained at one or other of the numerous coffee-houses and taverns which clustered about the old Palace like limpets upon a sea-wall. For social intercourse there were, besides these establishments, a number of more pretentious and, perhaps, more select coffee-houses in King Street, where the legislator, freed from the day's business, could drop in and talk political "shop" over a foaming tankard of strong ale or a cup of sack. Even the simplest refreshment, there is good reason to believe, was unobtainable in the precincts a couple of centuries ago, and perhaps at a considerably later period. "Pray thee, keep warm as thou can," said Dame Alice Kenyon, writing under date January 12th, 1693, to her husband, Roger Kenyon, at Westminster—"Pray thee keep warm, and take something in thy pocket to the House to supp off. Thy age and weakness require it."<sup>1</sup>

There was no doubt a certain freedom of manners in these earlier Parliamentary days, which made any special catering the less necessary. Members, as we may gather from this affectionate appeal of Dame Kenyon, were accustomed to take their own provender to the House, and, it may be surmised from certain entries in the Journals referring to the practice of eating nuts in the Chamber, they were not ashamed to consume it there. Indeed, we know from the direct statements of contemporary writers that the faithful Commons openly regulated



THE VALENTIA VAT.

This huge vessel in the Commons cellar is capable of holding 1,600 gallons. It is never drawn below a minimum of 400 gallons.

<sup>1</sup> Historical MS., 14th Report, Ap., p. 281.

## Social Aspects of Parliamentary Life—Wining and Dining 69

themselves with bread and cheese at the trial of Charles I.<sup>1</sup> Nor was it alone in the matter of eating and drinking that our ancestors allowed themselves latitude. They appear to have smoked pretty nearly as the fincey took them, even actually profaning the precincts of the Legislative Chamber, if we accept the following order of the House, dated May 23rd, 1693, in its plain meaning: "That no tobacco be taken by any member in the Gallery, nor at the Table sitting at Committees."

The need for proper accommodation was not seriously felt until the House took to sitting to the unconscionably late hours of five and six in the evening, as it did towards the middle of the eighteenth century. This change in Parliamentary custom almost necessarily involved a corresponding change in private habits. Attempts to snatch an advantage of a lax opponent

were as common then as now, and the member had to be well within hail if he wished to maintain the position of his party, which meant to him personally probably a very great deal. In this way a supply of refreshments within the precincts became practically a necessity. Before or about the period when special arrangements began to be made there was a pleasant custom of members "dropping in" on a congenial spirit and enjoying such hospitality as he had to offer. Wilberforce, who lived very conveniently in Palace Yard, was one of those who kept open house in this way. The stream of diners would begin about three o'clock, and there would usually be a party of about twenty. "It delighted us," said Mr. Wilberforce, "to see our friends in this way, especially as it gave us the opportunity of talking upon any important points of public business, without any great sacrifice of time. Those who came



MR. JOHN BELLAMY,

The founder of the Kitchen Department of the House of Commons. As proprietor of "Bellamy's Kitchen" he was intimate with Fox, Sheridan, and the younger Pitt.

<sup>1</sup> It may not be uninteresting here to note that at the proceedings of the South African Committee it was Mr Cecil Rhodes's daily custom during the period of his examination to have brought in a large glass of stout and a plate of sandwiches, which he partook of while giving evidence. But, of course, there is a broad distinction between a sitting of a Select Committee and a sitting of the House.



THE OVERMANTEL IN THE DINING-ROOM, HOUSE OF COMMONS.  
A magnificent specimen of the wood-carving which is a feature of the adornment of the Houses.

of his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, who never knew to a dozen or more how many friends he had asked to dinner. An amusing story is related by Prior in illustration of the great orator's carelessness. "Having been detained late in the House, he asked Fox, Lord John Cavendish, and two or three more of the party to sup, when, on announcing the object of their visit to Mrs. Burke, a look of annoyance and despair sufficiently told of the ill-provided state of the larder. A pause ensued. 'Surely,' said the host, with a comie face, 'there is beef enough?' Fox and two or three others, making an apology for momentary absence, hurried off to a neighbouring tavern, provided themselves each with a dish of such fare as could be procured,

up late put up with a mutton chop or beef steak. The Duke of Montrose called in one day as we were thus employed, but declined taking anything. Seeing, however, so many around him busy with knife and fork, he said, 'I cannot resist any longer,' and down he sat to a mutton chop. 'Ah, Duke,' said I, 'if your French cook could see you now, he would be quite affronted.'"

Burke was another who was accustomed to receive his friends in this delightful fashion. His *quintessence* was of the happy-go-lucky order—not dissimilar, in fact, from that

and, amid much laughter from all parties—particularly the master of the house, who cracked some jokes on their skill as waiters—passed an amusing evening."

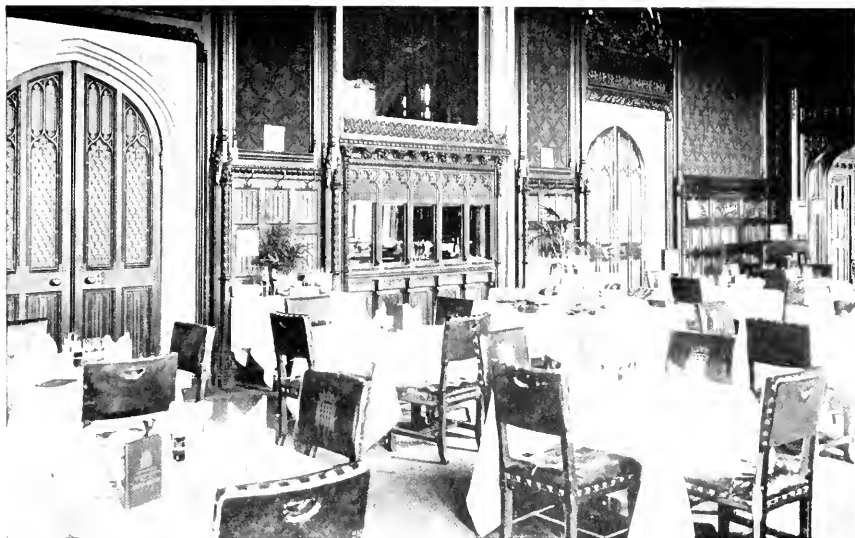
As far as the House of Commons is concerned, it was not until 1773 that any steps of a definite character were taken to provide refreshments regularly. In that year Mr. John Bellamy, on assuming the duties of deputy hon-keeper, was urged by members to make on his own account arrangements for a supply of edibles for consumption on the premises. As he



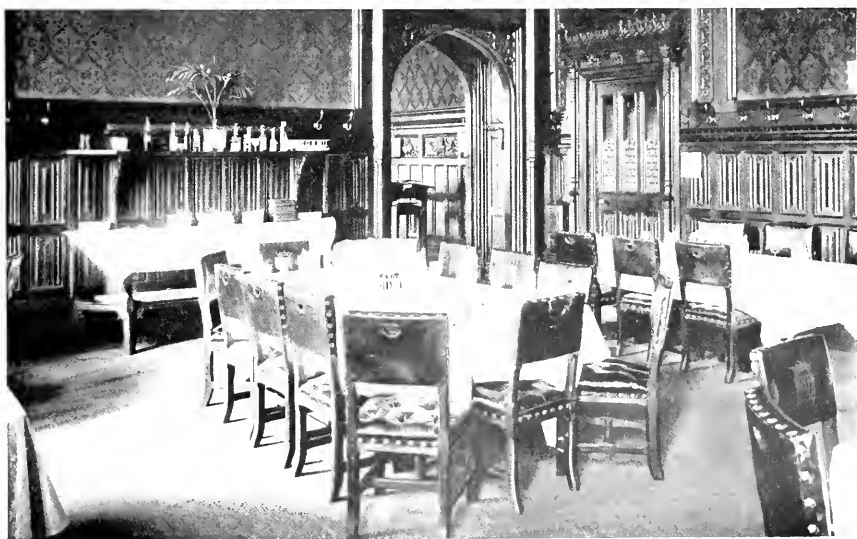
THE ILLEGAL BAR.

Otherwise the Strangers' Bar, at which refreshments are sold to visitors without the sanction of a licence.





THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DINING-ROOM.  
A fine apartment with windows overlooking the river.



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS DINING-ROOM - THE MINISTERS' TABLE.  
This table is by courtesy absolutely reserved for members of the Government. Usually it is fully occupied.

had only two rooms at his disposal, and these of no great size, he at first demurred<sup>1</sup> to undertaking the responsibility, but, on being pressed, he agreed to see what could be done. He fitted up his quarters in unpretentious fashion, and provided a few simple viands, such as joints of beef and sandwiches. In this way came into existence an institution which flourished for more than half a century, and won for its originator a certain degree of fame. The story that William Pitt on his death-bed cried, "Oh, for one of Bellamy's pies!" no doubt is apocryphal; but the mere gossiping association of the two personalities indicates that the shrewd old housekeeper made his mark in his own particular line.

Dickens in his "Sketches by Boz" gives a racy description of "Bellamy's" as he knew it, when early in the second quarter of the past century he made acquaintance with it as a Parliamentary reporter. There were then two rooms used for dining, in such close proximity to the House that the laughter and conversation of the diners floated into the chamber with the odour of the viands. Associated with these rooms was a little bar place with sash windows, where sat in state Nicholas, Bellamy's butler. "An excellent servant Nicholas is—an unrivalled compounder of salad dressing, an admirable preparer of soda water and lemon, a special mixer of cold grog and punch, and above all an unequalled judge of cheese." No description of him, however, is necessary, for if the visitor has one atom of observation, "one glance at his sleek, knowing-looking head and face, his prim white neckerchief, with the wooden tie into which it has been regularly folded for twenty years past, merging by imperceptible degrees into a small pleated shirt frill, and his comfortable-looking form encased in a well-brushed suit of



THE HOUSE OF LORDS DINING-ROOM.

Similar in its general arrangements to the Commons dining-room, but under separate management.

<sup>1</sup> See evidence of Mr. John Bellamy, the son, given before the Select Committee on House of Commons Officers &c., presented to the House August 12th, 1833.



From the portrait by D. Maclise, R.A.

CHARLES DICKENS,

Who was for several years in the Reporters' Gallery of the House of Commons. Writer of a spirited description of Bellamy's Kitchen in "Sketches by Boz."

with which she listens to something the young member near her mutters somewhat unintelligibly in her ear (for his speech is rather thick from some cause or other), and how playfully she digs the handle of a fork into the arm with which he detains her by way of reply. Jane is no bad hand at repartees, and showers them about with a degree of liberality and a total absence of reserve or constraint which occasionally excites no small amazement in the minds of strangers. She cuts jokes with Nicholas too, but looks up to him with a great deal of respect; the immovable stolidity with which Nicholas receives the aforesaid jokes and looks on at certain pastoral friskings and rompings (Jane's only recreations, and they are very innocent, too) which occasionally take place in the passage, is not the least amusing part of his character." The patrons of the establishment are hit off in a few ready touches. One of them is "a spare, squeaking old man . . . who, elevating a little cracked bantam sort of voice to its highest pitch, invokes damnation upon his own eyes or somebody else's at the commencement of every sentence he utters." He is "a very old frequenter of Bellamy's, much addicted to stopping 'after the House is up' (an inexpressible crime in Jane's eyes), and a complete walking reservoir of spirits and water." His companion, an old peer, has a large tumbler of hot punch brought him, while he "damns and drinks and drinks and damns and smiles." "Members arrive every moment in a great bustle to report that 'the

black, would give you a better idea of his real character than a column of our poor description could convey." But the real centre of interest at Bellamy's is the kitchen, where you are called upon to notice "the large fire and roasting jack at one end of the room, the little table for washing glasses and draining jugs at the other, the clock over the window opposite St. Margaret's Church, the deal tables and wax candles, the damask table-cloths and bare floor, the plate and china on the tables and the gridiron on the fire. Here, as the division is not expected for half an hour or two, a few members are lounging away their time, in preference to standing at the Bar of the House, or sleeping in one of the side galleries. . . . That female in black, not the one whom the Lord's Day Bill Baronet has just chucked under the chin, the shorter of the two, is 'Jane,' the Hebe of Bellamy's. Jane is as great a character as Nicholas in her way. Her leading features are a thorough contempt for the great majority of her visitors; her predominant quality love of admiration, as you cannot fail to observe if you mark the glee

Chancellor of the Exchequer is up,' and to get glasses of brandy and water to sustain them during the division; people who have ordered supper countermand it and prepare to go downstairs, when suddenly a bell is heard to ring with tremendous violence, and a cry of 'Division' is heard in the passage. This is enough; away rush members pell-mell. The room is cleared in an instant; the noise rapidly dies away; you hear the creaking of the last boot on the last stair, and are left alone with the leviathan of beef steaks."



*Engraved on the proof by Thomas Stoddart, R.A.*

#### WESTMINSTER HALL.

Showing the inn and coffee-houses which were once a characteristic feature of New Palace Yard.

Bellamy's, though rough and ready, as may be gathered from Dickens's lively description, was not at all plebeian in its charges. Members who can now purchase a bottle of excellent claret for a shilling, and obtain a hot meal for the same sum, would move the suspension of the Constitution if they had to pay the prices demanded of their predecessors at the beginning of the century. A sandwich cost a shilling, a glass of wine and water or negus was 1s. 6d., port and sherry cost 6s. per bottle, claret 10s., and madeira 8s. On the other hand, it should, in justice to the shade of the immortal Bellamy, be stated that he provided cold meat, with bread, beer, and cheese, for 2s. 6d., the same with a salad and tart for 3s. 6d., while 5s. 6d. secured the most expensive dinner that could be had, this consisting of "steaks, veal pie, mutton chops to any extent, with tarts, salads, pickles, beer, toasted cheese, etc." <sup>1</sup> surely the most indigestible *menu* that a legislator ever sustained eloquence upon. The business, however, was undoubtedly a very fine one. Rooms and furniture were provided at the national expense, there was very little risk, and there was a certain business at the highest rates. Moreover, the practice of supplying wine to members with their meals led to lucrative transactions outside the House, and so the foundations were laid of a business which exists to this day in Westminster.

It was in human nature that the establishment of this prosperous connection of the Bellamy

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Bellamy's evidence before the Select Committee of 1833.

family with the House should provoke envy. Many were the attacks, open and covert, made upon the system. For example, in a little work—a veritable *chronique scandaleuse* hereafter to be mentioned—written by a chief doorkeeper of the House and published in 1793, a Bellamy's sandwich is thus defined: "Two small slices of bread and butter, almost transparent, with a thin piece of stale ham or beef between them, and used to keep the people in the gallery from fastidiousness from eleven o'clock until the next morning. N.B.—Bellamy charges a shilling for them, and they don't stand him above twopence. . . . 'Bellamy's profit,' as Dick Rigby once said, when Cook was appointed Paymaster-General with him, 'is a d—d sight more than my guineas.'"

These grumblers notwithstanding, the system lasted many years after its founder had departed this life full of years—leaving a handsome fortune behind him. It would probably also have survived the life of his son had not the destruction of the old Houses of Parliament and the construction of the new building brought prominently to the front the question of the refreshment arrangements. It was not, however, until 1848 that anything definite was done. In the session of that year a Select Committee was appointed "to inquire into the proposed arrangements of the Kitchen and Eating and Accommodation Rooms for members and officers of the House of Commons in the New Palace of Westminster, and to report whether any and what improvements could be made in the present system of supplying refreshments." A report was in due course forthcoming, recommending the appointment of a Sessional Committee to control the arrangements of the Kitchen and Eating Departments. Effect was given to the Committee's proposal, and the new *régime* was installed immediately the Commons entered into occupation of its new home. Apparently its operations were not regarded with entire

approval by "the trade," for a petition was presented by hotel and tavern keepers in the immediate vicinity of the House complaining of the facilities for indiscriminate refreshment afforded by the department within the precincts. The Kitchen Committee, to whom the matter was referred, declined to vary their plans, believing them to be essential to the convenience of members and of visitors to the House; but they stated that "as a protection to other parties" they had been careful to give strict instructions that no refreshments whatever should be sold in the halls of the House upon those days when the House and its Committees were not sitting.

Once established, the system of direct official supervision of the creature needs of members was never abandoned. Changes, however, have been made in it from time to time, to meet the growing demands imposed upon the department by the extension of facilities for social intercourse and the lengthening of the hours of business. For a period the actual work of catering was left to a contractor, who received a grant from the public funds and supplied refreshments at fixed rates. Eventually the Committee took the duties into their own hands, and worked the department under a manager in the same way as the house committee of an ordinary club. This arrangement still obtains,



THE COMMONS IRISH WHISKY VAT,

In which a supply of about 300 gallons is constantly kept for members' consumption.



THE LOBBY BAR,

Where legislators obtain light refreshments during the sittings of the House. Strangers are not served here unless introduced by members.

and gives general satisfaction, as in the selection of the *personnel* of the Committee care is taken to appoint members of business aptitude and practical experience in the work.

The Committee holds its meetings in the office of the Sergeant-at-Arms fortnightly, and a sub-Committee of seven members meets weekly, the purchase of wines and spirits forming an important part of their deliberations. Extreme care is taken in the selection of stock. The practice is for well-known wine merchants to submit samples in bottles which bear no indication of their origin. These are numbered, and the members, with pencil and paper beside them, note down their opinion of each as it comes under

review. When the tasting operation is completed, notes are compared, and the order is given to the sample which meets with the greatest approval. So experienced are the Committee in the process of selection that it rarely happens that there is any great difference of opinion as to which is the best wine submitted.

One of the features of the Commons cellar is the Valentia vat, so named after the popular Whip, Viscount Valentia. This is a huge vessel capable of holding one thousand gallons of Scotch whisky, ten years old, 15 u.p. It is never drawn below a minimum of four hundred gallons. A smaller vat of Irish whisky contains three hundred gallons. The wine cellars are methodically arranged with bins of bottled wines, and among them are a selection of the Royal sherries from Buckingham and St. James's Palaces and Windsor Castle.

Some idea of the extent of the catering may be gathered from the fact that a staff of twenty cooks are employed, and that the total number of meals served during last session exceeded one hundred and eleven thousand. The tariff is arranged to suit all pockets. For a modest shilling the frugal member can obtain a meal adequate for his simple needs. An inclusive charge of 2s. secures a plain dinner of three courses. An additional shilling commands a more elaborate meal; while if a member spends 5s. he can fare most sumptuously on all the delicacies in season. The wine list is framed on lines as comprehensive as those of the bill of fare. A bottle of excellent claret costs no more than 10/., and a bottle of light hock or graves may be obtained for 1s. Champagne (1893 wine) ranges from 6s. the bottle to 8s. 6d., and a bottle of the 1884 vintage of a first-class brand costs no more than 15s. These charges are indicative of the principles upon which "the best club in London" is worked. The aim which is kept steadily in view by successive Kitchen Committees is to cater on the broadest lines and at the most moderate rates. How well they have succeeded the almost embarrassing popularity of the House of Commons dining-rooms abundantly testifies.

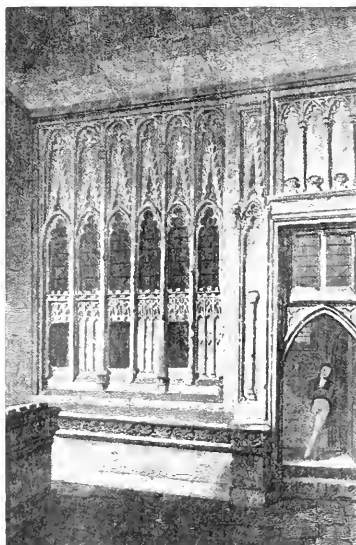
## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE LOBBY.

A GREAT Parliamentary institution is the Lobby. It is at once the green-room, the news exchange, and the playground of the House of Commons. Everybody of importance who is in the House or of the House is to be found there during the evening. Great questions of policy are discussed and sometimes settled there. Within its limits are Parliamentary friendships cemented, and occasionally—very occasionally—are differences exacerbated. On its flags representatives of the Press exchange confidences with Ministers, and find the pabulum for those political notes which are now a standing dish in the columns of every leading newspaper. No part of the Houses of Parliament is so cosmopolitan in its interests and sympathies; none is so broadly cynical in its way of looking at things. In a word, it is the most interesting centre that there is in the whole of the vast building.

When we come to inquire into the genesis of this famous annexe of the House of Commons, we are confronted with more than the ordinary difficulty of investigating old institutions. Official records are non-existent, tradition has little to say on the subject, and biography and history still less. The fact is, the Lobby, as we know it to-day, is in the main a purely modern development. A Lobby, no doubt, there always was, from the time the faithful Commons had their meeting-place in St. Stephen's Chapel, but it was a mere ante-chamber into which all and sundry were admitted, from personal servants of members to expectant placemen and casual idlers. Necessarily, in the circumstances it was a centre for the exchange of gossip, and those who wanted to know how the political world was wagging resorted thither. Old Pepys, in his day, seems to have been a fairly frequent visitor. Amongst several references to the place in his Diary is the following: "Jun. 14, 1659-60.—Nothing to do at our office. Thence into the Hall; and just as I was going to dinner from Westminster Hall with Mr. Moore (with whom I had been in the Lobby to hear news) I had spoke with Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper about my Lord's lodgings."

That the Lobby was a lively spot on occasion may be gathered from various resolutions which the House found itself constrained to pass from time to time in the interests of order. "That the Sergeant-at-Arms and his messengers do take all possible care to keep the Lobby, passages, and stairs of the House clear of all idle, loose, and disorderly persons," is the injunction which the House passed on January 27th, 1699, and it is again and again repeated. "Lacqueys and footmen" were in most instances specifically mentioned as of the class upon



THE LOWER LOBBY OF THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS.

It was here that members' footmen and servants were accustomed to congregate, oftentimes to the great annoyance of the House.



THE ORANGE-GIRL.

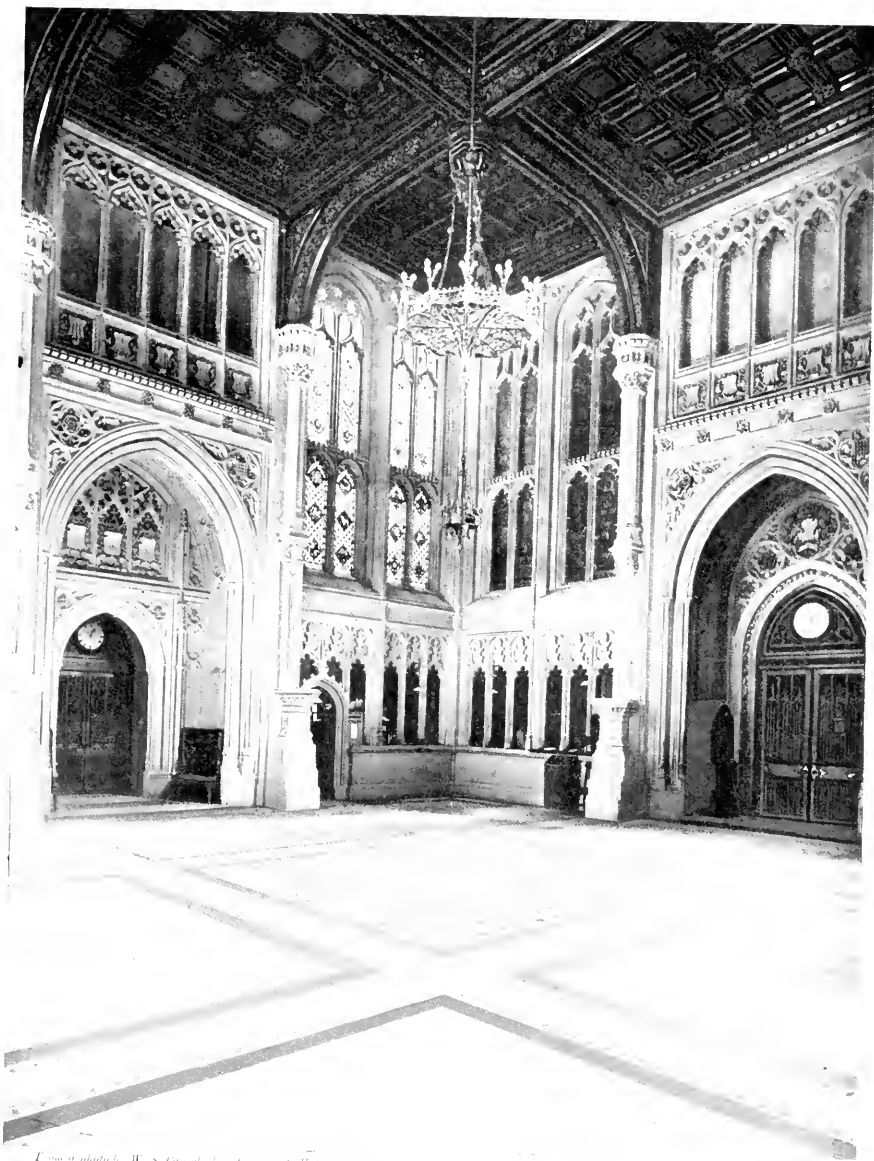
A well-known Lobby character in the seventeenth century.

whom the officials should have their eye; but "Papists" were also singled out, the House proclaiming that they must not "presume to come into Westminster Hall, the Court of Requests, or Lobby of this House on the sitting of this Parliament," and directing that the order be posted up on Westminster Hall gate and in the Lobby, and that the Sergeant-at-Arms should take into custody all persons offending against it. Occasionally at that period, no doubt, with the lacqueys and disorderly persons who thronged the Lobby there mingled people who had serious business to discharge. A case in point is to be found in the "Autobiography of Dr. George Clarke," in the Leyborne-Popham MS.,<sup>1</sup> where he relates the circumstances attending his dismissal by the Prince of Denmark, and mentions that while the Prince's agent, Mr. Nicholas, was acquainting him with the Prince's commands in the Lobby of the House of Commons, "a footman came to Mr. Nicholas and told him the Prince must speak with him immediately."

What the Lobby was like at the end of the eighteenth century we are able to judge from an extraordinary work called "Pearson's Political Dictionary," published in 1793. Joseph Pearson was for many years principal doorkeeper at the House, and as he was described when the work was published as "the late," it is to be presumed that his experience must have gone well back into that century. The old adage that no gentleman is a hero to his valet finds exemplification in this worthy doorkeeper's pages. He jotted down freely and frankly his views of men and things, and he spared neither rank, age, nor sex in his confidences. A more personal — it may be said a more scandalous — legacy was never left to posterity by any official of the House. It has, however, one saving merit. It gives us a picture of contemporary Parliamentary life and manners such as we could not possibly otherwise obtain. The work is made up of entries under different headings. The Lobby is described as "a place crowded with members and other *servants*, and noisy as a Jews' synagogue till the High Constable and his assistants clear it of all strangers except those reporters who have been too lazy to come in time to get into the gallery, and who in that case write all the debates in the Lobby." There is a *note bene* to the following effect: "The members shouldn't choke up the fireside, nor come whisking in from the different coffee-houses just to know who's speaking, and when the debate is over." A character of the Lobby, described under another head with a wealth of course detail, is the

<sup>1</sup> Historical MS., Leyborne-Popham MS., p. 283.





*From a photograph by W. S. Gimpel, Esq., 1877. Reproduced by permission.*

#### THE LOBBY, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The door on the right of the reader is the entrance to the Legislative Chamber. At the door on the left the party Whip is posted and take note of members as they enter and leave the building.



CHARLES JAMES FOX AS DEMOSTHENES.

One of the many caricatures published of Fox. It has a satirical reference to his fondness for platform oratory.

orange-woman, who, "with her black cloak thrown aside a little, her black eyes and black hair covered by a slight curtained bonnet, used to sit . . . with a basket of oranges on one hand and hard biscuits on the other, chiefly for the use of my friend Charles Fox, who seems more relieved by a biscuit in a hot debate than I am by a bumper of brandy." She usually appeared, the observant doorkeeper tells us, in "clean white silk stockings, Turkey leather shoes, and pink silk short petticoat." Her dress was of "clean, nice, light cotton," but sometimes towards the end of the session she would appear in "a sprigg'd pencil'd *member's* muslin gown, with a thin gauze neckerchief by way of enamel," to display her charms to greater advantage. A reference to the trading operations of this character is made in the following lines from the *Rolliad*—that singular political anthology which the Parliamentary wit and wisdom of the eighteenth century produced:—

O take, wise youth, the Hesperian freit, of use  
Thy lungs to cherish with balsamic juice.  
With this thy parched roof moisten; nor consume  
Thy hours and guineas in the eating-room;  
Till, full of claret, down with wild uproar,  
You reel, and, stretch'd along the gallery, snore.

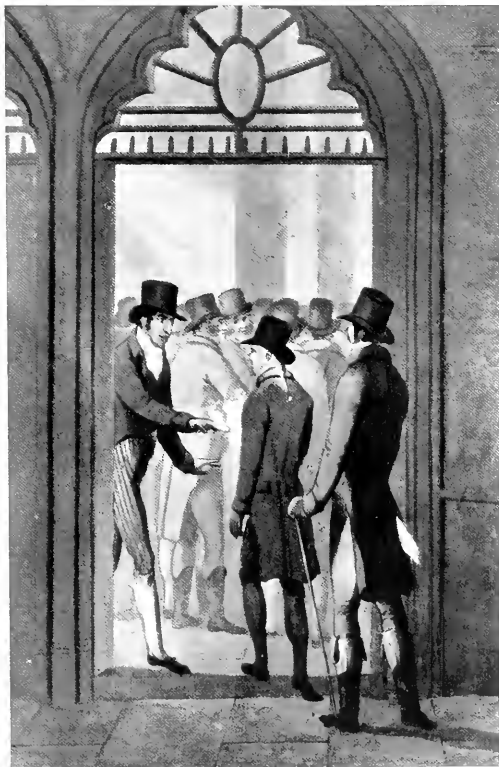
But, to return to our old friend the doorkeeper. Under the heading "Going Home" we have the following:—"A signal for dinner. Mem: I can always tell the members invited to take their mutton with the Speaker, by their pushing out first." "Dinner Bell" is explained as "a bell rung upon the winding up of a debate, for the members upstairs at Bellamy's to come down and do as they are bid. N.B.—A good excuse for some to leave their bills unpaid." "Smoking Room" is thus ironically defined: "Formerly this was a room for members to smoke their pipes in. Now the only use of it is for them to write franks for the reporters by way of currying favour with them for good speeches. It is likewise used by the gallery people to talk politics in when they are driven out of the House on a division."

There are other references less cognate to the subject in hand, but equally interesting from the glimpses they give of the Parliamentary manners of a century since. "Alice's," for example, is described as "a coffee-house frequented by members for soups, which Bellamy can't make, and other refreshments, while Burke is speaking. Mem: He never rises but I have directly to open the door to let members out." Again we are told that "Jacobs's" is "a well-known house kept by a black fellow of that name in Old Palace Yard, and frequented by servants of members, who have a sort of rendezvous there till the Lords and Commons are up." "Here, too," the voracious author proceeds, "bills are frequently brought in. The Knights of the Whip and party-coloured tribe here fancy themselves as great as their masters,

and are always talking of the speeches they have made, and when their House will be up. Bills are read a first, second, and third time, and Master Jacobs obliged after all to set up a Devil to Lord Thurlow, a Doctor to the Speaker, Welsh rabbit to Lord Kenyon, and three-farthings' worth of vinegar to Sir Pepper Arden, and a thousand other articles, for the rogues have, all of them, the impudence to use their masters' names."

The impression left by Pearson's scandalous jottings is that the legislators of old days were prone to conviviality, and in this respect at least he did them no injustice. The amount of drinking—open unbridled drinking—a century or two ago was appalling. It was no dishonour to the greatest to be seen under the influence of drink in public—rather the contrary. It was a noble weakness which differentiated the man of spirit from the mere huckster. In the Restoration period the proceedings of the House of Commons were not infrequently stained by drunken orgies. Pepys mentions one instance which was brought under his personal notice. "Told how Sir Allan Brodrick and Sir Allen Apsley did come drunk the other day into the House, and did both speak for half an hour together, and could not either be pulled or bid to sit down and hold their peace, to the great contempt of the

King's servants and cause." In the eighteenth century the conditions, if anything, were worse. For example, on July 15th, 1716, we find Lord Stair writing to Lord Cathcart:<sup>1</sup> "The Duke of Leeds is laid up. A hackney coach had like to have broken his leg t'other night when he was got drunk." Again, on December 4th, 1722, Lord Cathcart writes to a friend giving an edifying account of some midnight frolics of the Duke of Wharton and himself. He states that he and his friends were drunk, and adjourned to a Committee of the whole House. "We met with the Duke of Wharton as well refreshed as I. He proposed to survey all the ladies in the galleries. . . . He proposed to knock up Argyle; & the King." The end of it was that the roysterers knocked up the Duke of Argyle, who received them well. Yet another instance of the drinking customs of the eighteenth century is supplied in a letter of the Marquis of Rockingham to Sir George Savile dated from Wentworth, March 24th, 1768. In this the writer says: "I have not suffered in health by the fatigues of body or of mind. I have had a good quantity of madeira. On Monday last I was very tolerably drunk by five o'clock, and though I went through a variety of ceremonies, such as attending the assembly, supping and drinking with



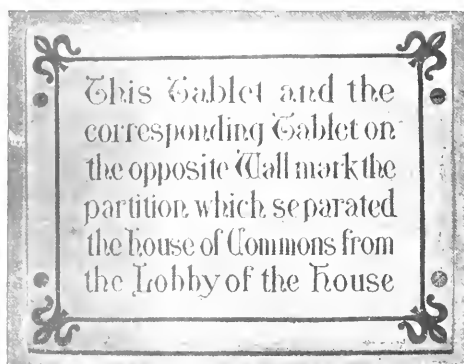
*From an engraving published a few days after the event.*

THE ASSASSINATION OF THE RIGHT HON. SPENCER PERCEVAL IN THE LOBBY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON MAY 11TH, 1812.

<sup>1</sup> Historical MS., vol. ii. p. 26.

many companies, I walked home about four o'clock in the morning, after having kept myself in fact continually drunk or elevated for eleven hours. I had a very good night's rest, and was not at all the worse for it the next day." A final contribution to the volume of evidence is supplied in a passage contained in a letter written by Sir Gilbert Elliott, afterwards Lord Minto, in 1788. This administrator, after an expression of surprise at the way in which the great orators of the House of Commons reconciled their drinking habits with their public exertions, wrote: "Fox drinks what I should call a great deal, though he is not reckoned to do so by his companions; Sheridan excessively, and Grey more than any of them; but it is in a much more gentlemanlike way than our Scotch drunkards, and is always accompanied by clever, lively conversation on subjects of importance. Pitt, I am told, drinks as much as anybody, generally more than any of his company, and he is a pleasant convivial man at table." It hardly needs to be said that we have advanced enormously from the manners of these "good old times." Hard drinking in high political places, if not unknown, is so exceedingly rare as to be practically non-existent.

Turning from this interesting question of Parliamentary morals, we must now touch upon



A TABLET IN ST. STEPHEN'S HALL.

To enable visitors to locate the points of interest in the old building.

an incident in the history of the Lobby which caused, at the time it happened, a thrill of horror throughout the length and breadth of the three kingdoms. We refer to the assassination of the Hon. Spencer Perceval by the madman Bellingham. The event occurred on May 11th, 1812, under circumstances which will take little time in the relation. On the day named, Perceval, having been summoned from Downing Street to a sitting of the House, walking rapidly through the Lobby, was about to enter the door of the Legislative Chamber, when a tall man in a tradesman's dress, who was standing by, raised a pistol and fired. The shot, which was at almost point-blank range, took immediate effect in the statesman's heart. "Perceval walked on one or two paces, faintly uttered, 'Oh! I am murdered,' and fell on the

floor. The affair had been so instantaneous that no one knew what had happened. Perceval had fallen at William Smith's feet; and Smith, till he raised up the body, had not recognised the murdered man. An officer of the House called out, 'Where is the rascal that fired?' and the tall man rose up from his seat, and said, 'I am the unfortunate man.' General Gascoigne seized the man with so much violence that he said afterwards that he feared his arm would have been broken. Other members in the meantime assisted in securing the assassin. The man was searched; and another pistol, still loaded, and some papers were found on him. Perceval's body had by this time been placed in a room in the Speaker's house. Medical aid had been called in, to pronounce all such aid useless. . . . The shot by which Perceval had fallen had been heard in the House of Commons. For the moment the business of the day was not interrupted; a moment later a confused whisper that some one had been shot ran through the House. A rush was made to the door, and the truth became known. The Speaker was summoned from his house by the intelligence (the House was in Committee at the time), and took the chair. The assassin was led up to the table between two of the officers of the House, General Gascoigne, the member for Liverpool, identified him as John Bellingham; the Speaker detained him till a



THE SPEAKER'S PROCESSION.

A stately function which is a daily prelude to the sitting of the House of Commons. As the procession proceeds through the Lobby all heads are bowed in token of respect.

Middlesex magistrate was obtainable, and then had him escorted, under a strong guard of members, to the prison-room of the Sergeant-at-Arms."<sup>1</sup>

The murderer proved to be the son of a Huntingdonshire land surveyor, who had been in confinement as a lunatic, and had died insane. Bellingham, there is little doubt, was himself mad, but, as Romilly put it at the time, his was "a species of madness which probably, for the security of mankind, ought not to exempt a man from being answerable for his actions." The only conceivable motive for the crime was a grudge against Perceval because he would not interfere to secure Bellingham's release from prison in Russia, where he was incarcerated for five years for debt. Insane or not, however, the assassin received short shrift. It so happened that the assizes were being held at the time, and advantage was taken of the circumstance to bring him to immediate trial. Within seven days of the commission of the crime his body was swinging from the gallows.

This tragic affair, it should be stated for the sake of clearness, took place in the Lobby of the old House, and, therefore, at a spot near the western end of St. Stephen's Hall. A tablet to be found there gives the exact limits of the old Lobby, and also indicates the position of the door from which it was entered from Westminster Hall by Perceval on the fatal day.

The present Lobby, though it can boast no old associations and has no dark episode to stain its history, is yet not without its own special features of interest. During the great

struggle over the question of Mr. Bradlaugh's admission to the House it was the scene of some lively encounters between the officers of the House and the pugnacious champion of heterodoxy. About the same period it was often in a ferment of excitement over the differences, public and private, arising out of the Home Rule debates. Feeling ran so high at times that it was only by the good offices of peacemakers and the discreet management of the officials that breaches of the peace did not occur. These, however, were but transitory ebullitions. The prevailing mood of the Lobby is a cynical good-humour, which as a rule rises altogether superior to the mere spirit of faction. Nothing is commoner than to see members engaged one hour in the most heated altercation across the floor of the House and the next exchanging banter in the best of temper in the Lobby on the incidents of the debate. There is amongst members a pleasing spirit of *camaraderie* which knows no distinctions of rank or divisions of politics; and nowhere is it more manifest than in the Lobby. Here the stern, unbending Tory of the old school may be seen arm-in-arm with the most uncompromising of Radicals; here we may find the scion of a noble house which has possessed the strawberry leaves for generations



THE DOOR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY WHICH THE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER IS ENTERED FROM THE LOBBY.

On each side are curious hooded doorkeepers' boxes.

hobnobbing with the Labour member whose perchance was only a few years previously earning his living as a working miner; here, not improbably, you may come across an *intransigent* Nationalist cheek by jowl with some Ematical Orangeman on a matter of business routine. Nor are the amenities of the Lobby confined to mere trivial courtesies. When Mr. Bradlaugh, after many rebuffs and humiliations, got his Oaths Bill through the House, the man to first

<sup>1</sup> "The Life of the Hon. Spencer Perceval," p. 296.

offer him his congratulations was Sir John Mowbray, the late venerable member for Oxford University and "Father" of the House. Similarly, when Mr. Parnell vindicated himself from the charge of writing the notorious Pigott letters, it was the late Sir Walter Barttelot, an old and highly respected Conservative member, who broke down the barrier of suspicion which existed between the Uncrowned King and his brother members by cordially felicitating him upon unmasking his slanderers. These are but typical instances of the temper and feeling which govern the relations of members in this ante-chamber of the House. It is, indeed, only on very rare occasions that the angry passions which provoke tempestuous outbursts in the House find their echo here.

Politically, the Lobby is important as the headquarters of the Whips of the various parties. Night in, night out, these vigilant guardians of the party interests keep watch and ward. No one goes out unchallenged. It would, in fact, be as easy for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle as for a member to come in or go out unobserved. As the hour approaches for a division the Lobby fills up, and in process of time it becomes a seething mass of humanity. Then the bells tinkle, and stentorian cries of "Division" are sent echoing and re-echoing through the corridors, until they finally lose themselves in one expiring shriek in New Palace Yard. Members pour in from the smoking-rooms and libraries to swell the crowd which is massed about the principal door like a swarm of bees about a hive. There is a confused hum of conversation, growing less every minute until it finally dies away, and the Lobby is left in solitude save for the officials and police and a stray journalist or two. Shortly the order to "Clear the Lobby" is given through the wicket of the now locked door of the Legislative Chamber, the "strangers" are bundled out into the corridors, and the Lobby becomes even more deserted. But only for a time. Gradually the members filter back from the House, and in perhaps fifteen minutes' time the place is as thronged as ever again. Soon the doors are unlocked, strangers readmitted, and the life of the Lobby drops into its accustomed groove.

Before leaving the Lobby a reference must be made to it as a centre of journalistic activity. Time was, as we have seen, when every one who cared to take the trouble to walk to St. Stephen's could enter the precincts. Even down to comparatively recent times, nothing more than a little self-confidence was needed to carry one to the very door of the House. But the dynamite outrages, amongst other things, worked a great and, on the whole, salutary change in the conditions of the Lobby. The right of admission was strictly limited to representatives of leading newspapers, the chief officials of leading political organisations, and private bill agents and others interested in private bill legislation. Unless on this "Lobby List," it is impossible for a person to penetrate the jealously guarded outer portals, much less to remain for any time in the Lobby. In this fashion a great journalistic corporation has been built up, which, though closely allied with the Press Gallery, is yet completely distinct from it. It has its own committee of management, its own rooms for writing, and its own rules of conduct. According as the times are lively or the reverse, its importance increases or diminishes; but it ever gives to the Lobby a characteristic feature.



CORRIDOR FROM COMMONS LOBBY  
TO CONFERENCE ROOM.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LADIES AT THE HOUSE.

"LADIES at the House" there have been in one character or another almost from time immemorial. As we have already seen, they were present at one period as legislators, or, at all events, had the right to be present. It is also fairly certain that as attendants on the Court many dames of high birth participated in the ceremonial functions which accompanied the sittings of Parliament under the presidency of the King. Occasionally, too, they would appear to have played what in these days we should consider a popular part in the doings of the

Legislature. So much is to be gathered from a reference contained in the works of John Stow to a singular incident which occurred in the Parliament of 1428. According to this old chronicler, on a certain day while Parliament was sitting, "one Mistress Stokes, with divers other stout women of London, of good account and well appareled," went "openly to the Upper House of Parliament and delivered letters to the Duke of Gloucester, to the Archbishops, and the other lords, because he would not deliver his wife Jacqueline out of her grievous imprisonment (she being then detained as prisoner by the Duke of Burgundy), and suffering her there to remain unkindly whilst he kept another adulteress, contrary to the law of God and the honourable estate of matrimony." These early advocates of women's rights, the first of a long line of fair reformers who have invaded the legislative precincts to redress the wrongs of their



A MEDIEVAL EPISODE IN PARLIAMENT.

Lady petitioners attend at the House of Lords in 1428 to demand the release of the wife of the Duke of Gloucester, detained as a prisoner in France.



sex, seem to have created no small sensation, and from the fact that the Commons ventured to espouse the cause of the unfortunate Jaqueline, we may infer that their remonstrance had some effect. The course taken by the "Nether House" was to cunningly tack to a subsidy granted to the Duke of Gloucester a petition in favour of the Duchess. This document in quaint language sets forth that "My Lady of Gloucester liveth in so grete dolour and hevyness and hath so lamentably written to our Sovereign Lord and to all the Estate of this noble Roiaume to be pourveyed for by way of trettee or in otherwise by the high wisdom of our Sovereign Lord and the habundant discretion of the Lords of his Counseill," that the Commons were constrained to ask "that her person and the alliance between this noble Roiaume and her lands" might "be put in salvetee and sickernes in singular comfort of the said Commons and of all that they byn comyn for." History is silent as to the outcome of this intervention; but for the sake of common humanity we may trust that "Mistress Stokes" and her sturdy following of matrons "of good account and well apparell'd" did not make their journey to Westminster in vain.

In the episode just described we have seen ladies at the door of Parliament, practically in the Lobby, clamouring for justice to one of their sex. Between two and three centuries later we meet with a lady in Parliament itself in the somewhat different rôle of a suitor at the Bar of the House of Commons, one of many fair petitioners of that period. The applicant was Ann Fitzharris, widow of a certain Edward Fitzharris, who was executed in 1681 on political grounds. Her story, which was embodied in a petition she personally presented to the House on March 16th, 1688, was a strange one. It was to the effect that her husband had been prevailed upon seven years previously by the Popish interest to frame "a treasonable libel to be laid on the Protestants, and being seized in the attempts" was betrayed by his employers, who, fearful of being known, sacrificed him to conceal their own guilt. Tried before a prejudiced Bench and a packed jury, he was condemned to death and executed. As a consequence the petitioner and her three children were left in great distress, and she therefore prayed the House "to take the whole matter into their consideration, that the deplorable



A LADY PETITIONER AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE IN 1688.  
Widow Fitzharris pleading for support in her distress caused by the unjust execution of her husband.



THE DUCHESS OF GORDON,

A famous eighteenth-century beauty who once appeared in the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons in male attire.

condition of herself should be considered." The prayer of the petition was answered. On May 15th a Committee was appointed, and it subsequently conducted an investigation into the circumstances of the trial. In the result a recommendation was made that the petitioner and her three children should be commended to the King "as an object of charity." Thereafter, Ann Fitzharris figures no more upon the Parliamentary stage, though her case supplies one of the most interesting precedents in constitutional text-books.

Not long before this singular business engaged the attention of the House of Commons—to be precise on June 1st, 1675—the presence of ladies as spectators in the Legislative Chamber had been made a subject of public comment. The incident arose in this way. There was a debate proceeding on some question of interest, when the Speaker (Seymour) suddenly broke in with the remark, "I am sure I saw petticoats." The amused House, as eager then as it is to-day for anything in the nature of a "scene," broke off its business to look at the throng of ladies who crowded the back benches of the Strangers' Gallery and were peering over the shoulders of

the gentlemen in front of them at the members on the floor of the House. "What borough do these ladies sit for?" inquired the Speaker in tones of mock severity. "They serve for the Speaker's Chamber," jerked out a Parliamentary wit of the time. "The Speaker might take them for gentlemen with fine sleeves dressed like ladies," remarked another jester. And so, laughing at its own humour, the House betook itself anew to the business of the day.

This curious little interlude gives us an interesting insight into the attitude of the House two centuries ago towards fair visitors in the legislative precincts. We may gather from it that though ladies were denied admission they did occasionally find their way in, and that, once in, their presence did not excite the feelings of amazement—it may be said of horror—which the appearance of a female figure inside the Legislative Chamber would now arouse. The truth is that, progressive as Parliament has been in most things, in its attitude towards ladies it has in many respects retrograded. If it were now even so much as proposed that male and female visitors should sit together in the Strangers' Galleries, the House would be in a ferment of indignation; yet for generations the two sexes mingled as spectators of the debates. Nor was the attendance of ladies of a casual or intermittent description, at least during a considerable period. Proof of this is to be found in the gossip records of the eighteenth century, where numerous references are made to the part the "ladies of quality" played in the doings at St. Stephen's. Here, for example, is what one well-known lady had to say in a letter to a friend written in February, 1762: "In the House of Commons everybody who can articulate is a speaker, to the great despatch of business and solidity of councils. They sit late every night, as every young gentleman who has a handsome person, a fine coat, a well-shaped leg, or a clear voice, is anxious to exhibit these advantages. To this kind of beau-ornatory and tea-table talk the ladies, as is reasonable, resort very constantly. At first they attended in such numbers as to fill the body of the House on great political occasions; but a ghost the Cock Lane, started up in a dirty obscure alley in the City, and diverted the attention of the female politicians."

From this it is pretty clear not merely that ladies had admission to the public galleries,

but that they actually occupied seats by the side of members on the sacred floor of the House. How this system of uncontrolled freedom was ultimately abandoned in favour of absolute exclusion, is an oft-told tale. It came about through a display of fractiousness on the part of the ladies, which constitutes one of the most diverting episodes that ever occurred in Parliament. The facts are worth relating. A great debate on the state of the nation, on February 2nd, 1778, had drawn to St. Stephen's an exceptionally large number of ladies. Not content with crowding the galleries, they trespassed upon some seats under the front gallery, from which they were customarily excluded. A bluff naval captain, who was a member of the House, incensed at the practical monopoly of the strangers' benches by the fair sex, and the consequent exclusion of several of his male friends, drew attention to the presence of strangers, with the result that the order was issued for the clearing of the galleries. It was easier to give this order than to execute it. The ladies, having come to the House for an evening's amusement, were not to be easily denied. With one consent they turned a deaf ear to the commands of the House. In vain the officials implored and threatened in turn. The ladies absolutely declined to move. Nor was their defiance of a merely passive character. They laughed and stamped and jeered, and generally conducted themselves with a licence which, in these times, we should only look for in the gallery of an East End theatre. The authorities were in despair. They could not use force, and, on the other hand, it was impossible to permit the mandate of the House to be flouted. In their difficulty they adopted the only course open to them. They opposed obstinacy to obstinacy, and so in the long run carried their point. But it was a full two hours before the skirts of the last of the ladies disappeared through the doorway of the House. Afterwards, so rigorous was the ban against the ladies, that Mrs. Sheridan was driven to the expedient of donning male attire in order to secure the opportunity of hearing her husband's eloquence. Wrexall also mentions in his "Memoirs" having seen on one occasion the beautiful Duchess of Gordon in male attire in the Strangers' Gallery.

There must have been something in the atmosphere of the Palace of Westminster in those days which tended to lawlessness amongst the fair sex, for the scene described was no isolated incident. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in her letters, describes in her own vivacious fashion a somewhat similar outburst which occurred about the year 1738 in the "other House." "The ladies," she wrote, "have shown their zeal and appetite for knowledge in a most glorious manner. At the last warm debate in the House of Lords it was unanimously resolved there should be no crowd of unnecessary auditors. Consequently, the fair sex were

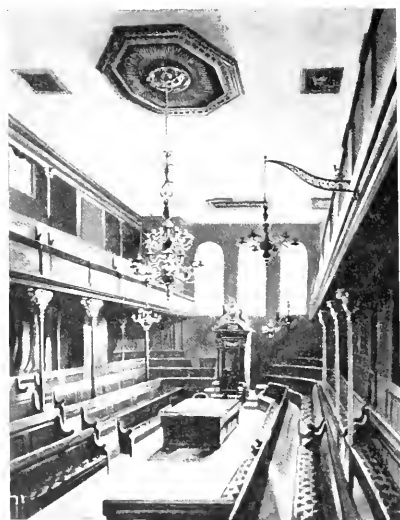


*From the National Portrait Gallery.*

THE DUCHESS OF QUEENSBERRY (AS A MILKMAID).

A noted beauty and political dame of the eighteenth century.

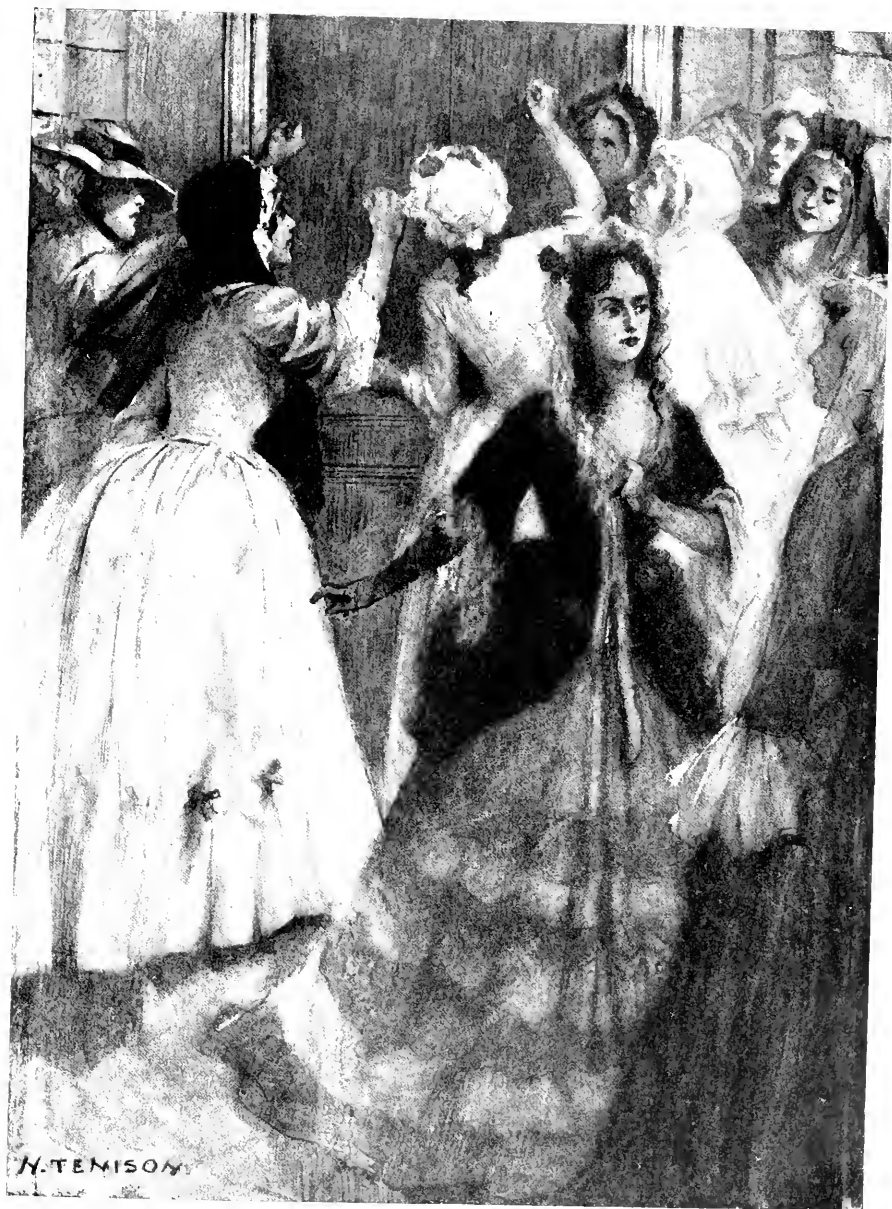
excluded, and the gallery destined to the sole use of the House of Commons. Notwithstanding which determination a tribe of ladies resolved to show on this occasion that neither men nor laws could resist them. These heroines were Lady Huntingdon, the Duchess of Queensberry, the Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Westmorland, Lady Cobham, Lady Charlotte Edwin, Lady Archibald Hamilton and her daughter, Mrs. Scott, and Mrs. Pendarvis, and Lady Francis Saunderson. I am thus particular in their names since I look upon them to be the boldest assertors and most resigned sufferers for liberty I ever read of. They presented themselves at the door at nine o'clock in the morning, where Sir William Saunderson respectfully informed them the Chancellor had made an order against their admittance. The Duchess of Queensberry, as head of the squadron, pushed at the ill breeding of a mere lawyer, and desired him to let them up the stairs privately. After some modest refusals, he swore by G—d he would not let them in. Her Grace, with a noble warmth, answered, 'By G—d they would come in, in spite of the Chancellor and the whole House.' This being reported, the Peers resolved to starve them out. An order was made that the door should not be opened until they had raised their siege. These amazons now showed themselves qualified even for the duty of foot-soldiers. They stood there till five in the afternoon without sustenance . . . every now and then playing volleys of thumps, kicks, and raps against the door with so much violence that the speakers in the House were scarce heard. When the Lords were not to be conquered by this, the two duchesses (very well apprised of the use of stratagems in war) commanded a dead silence of half an hour, and the Chancellor, who thought this a certain proof of their absence (the Commons also being very impatient to enter), gave order for the opening of the door, upon which they all rushed in, pushed aside their competitors, and placed themselves in the front row of the gallery. They stayed there until after eleven, when the House rose, and during the debate gave applause and showed marks of dislike, not only by smiles and winks (which have always been allowed in these cases), but by noisy laugh and apparent contempts (which is supposed the true reason why poor Lord Hervey spoke so miserably)."



THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Showing ventilator in ceiling through which ladies viewed the House.

On another occasion, a good many years later, the peeresses appear to have again distinguished themselves by their lack of restraint in the House. The incident relates to the debates on Catholic Emancipation, and is recorded in the following entry in Greville's Diary, under date April 4th, 1829: "The House of Lords was very full, particularly of women; every fool in London thinks it necessary to be there. It is only since last year that the steps of the throne have been crowded with ladies; formerly one or two got in, who skulked behind the throne or were hid in Tyrwhitt's (the Black Rod) box, but now they fill the space and put themselves in front with their large bonnets without fear or shame. . . . Lady Jersey is in a fury with Lord Anglesey, and goes about saying he insulted her in the House of Lords the other night. She was sitting on one of the steps of the throne, and the Duchess of Richmond on the step above. After Lord Anglesey had spoken he came and spoke to the Duchess, who said, 'How well you did speak!' on which he said, 'Hush! you must take care what you say, for here is Lady Jersey, and she reports for the newspapers'; on which Lady Jersey said very angrily, 'Lady Jersey is



A SCENE OUTSIDE THE HOUSE OF LORDS IN 1738.

Aristocratic ladies clamouring for admission after they had been excluded by an order of the House.

here for her own amusement; what do you mean by reporting for newspapers?' to which he replied with a profound bow, 'I beg your ladyship's pardon; I did not mean to offend you, and if I did I make the most ample apology.' This is his version; hers, of course, is different."

To these lively incidents, and others of a similar character which have not been handed down to us, is probably to be attributed the strong prejudice which grew up against the admission of ladies to the House of Commons—a prejudice which in a modified form survives to this day. Whether so or not, the effect of the scene in the House of Commons to which reference has been made resulted in the banishment of ladies from the chamber for more than half a century. For a time they were kept absolutely at arm's length, but eventually, as a great concession, they were admitted to the lantern above the big chandelier which lighted the old House. This was a miserable exchange for the freedom formerly enjoyed. Not more than fourteen could be accommodated there at one time, and the smoke and heat rendered the atmosphere almost insufferable. Miss Edgeworth, in her memoirs, gives an entertaining description of a visit to this dog-hole in 1822. "We went," she says, "one night to the House of Commons. Mr. Whitbread took us there. A garret—the whole size of the room—the former chapel, now the House of Commons; below kit-cats of Gothic chapel windows stopped up appear on each side; above the floor, and above roof-beams. One lantern, with one furthing candle, all the light. In the middle of the garret is what seemed like a sentry-box of deal boards, and old chairs placed around it; on these we got and stood, and peeped over the top of the boards. Saw large chandelier with lights blazing immediately below; a grating of iron across veiled the light so that we could look down and beyond it. We saw half the table and the mace lying on it, and papers, and by peeping hard two figures of clubs at the farther end; but no eye could see the Speaker or his chair—only his feet; his voice and terrible 'Order' was soon heard. We could see part of the Treasury Bench and the Opposition in their places—the tops of their heads, profiles and gestures perfectly."

Such was the position of affairs from the end of the eighteenth century until the fire of 1834, which changed many things, brought to the front the desirability of making adequate provision for ladies within the chamber itself. The question was referred for consideration to a Select Committee, and this body, in July, 1835, reported in favour of an extension of privileges to the fair sex. Its chief recommendations were:—

"That a portion of the Strangers' Gallery at the north end of the House, not exceeding a quarter of the whole, and capable of containing twenty-four ladies, be set apart for their accommodation, divided by a partition from the rest of the gallery, and screened in front by an open trellis work.

"That a book should be left in the custody of some person appointed by the Sergeant-at-Arms, in a place made for the purpose at the door of the entrance of the proposed gallery.



OUTSIDE ENTRANCE TO LADIES' GALLERY OF PRESENT HOUSE.

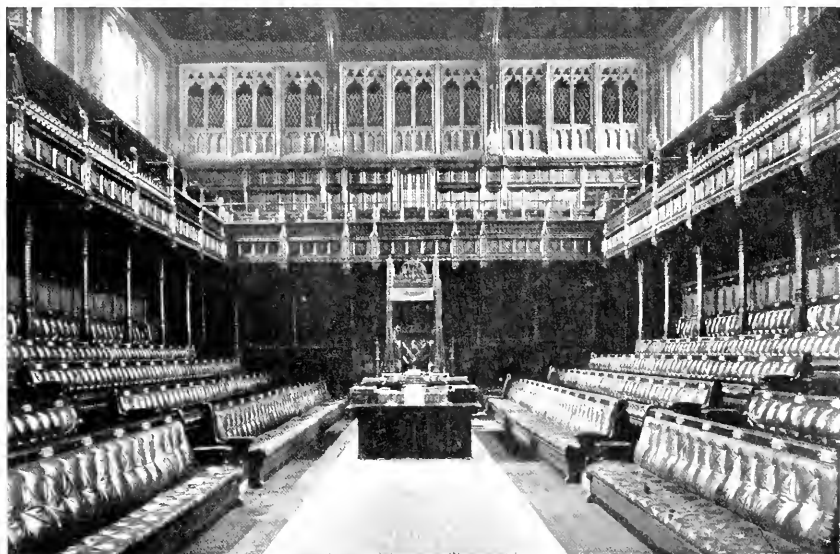
The policeman on duty closely scrutinises all orders for admission.

"That no member be allowed to introduce more than two ladies in the course of one week, unless the gallery should not be fully occupied.

"That the gallery so proposed to be set apart be called the Ladies' Gallery, and be left exclusively for their accommodation."

These proposals, it should be stated, related to the temporary House of Commons constructed in the late House of Lords (or old Court of Requests) after the fire, to accommodate the lower branch of the Legislature pending the construction of the new building. The Select Committee, however, deemed that their reference was sufficiently wide to enable them to deal with the question permanently, and they consequently added to their recommendations one in favour of the construction of a Ladies' Gallery in the new House, capable of accommodating not less than forty ladies. This suggestion of the Select Committee was not carried out without strenuous opposition from several quarters. Lord Brougham, at a meeting of the Building Committee, referring to the Ladies' Gallery, said: "If such a proposition is to be made, I enter my protest against it, and shall take the sense of your lordships upon it, as being contrary to the principle which ought to govern legislative proceedings. I think the ladies would be better employed in almost any other way than in attending Parliamentary debates. I like to see them in their proper places." The Marquis of Lansdowne was equally emphatic. "Ladies," he said, "are not mentioned in the report, and, so far as I can prevent it, they never shall be."

Notwithstanding these ungallant sentiments the ladies, as we know, had their gallery in the new House, though the restrictions in regard to its limits were a sore point with the architect, who, if he had been free, would have dealt with the question on much more generous lines. In the interval of a half-century which has elapsed since the gallery was opened, the position of ladies at the House has been enormously strengthened. The obnoxious grille, it is true, has resisted all efforts to either displace it or materially modify it. But, on the other hand, fair visitors have asserted themselves in other directions in such a fashion as would have



THE PRESENT HOUSE OF COMMONS, SHOWING LADIES' GRILLE ABOVE THE REPORTERS' GALLERY.

Ladies, besides being accommodated with seats in the gallery behind the grille, are permitted to view the House when sitting from a stand just outside the entrance opposite the Speaker's chair.



THE TERRACE : AFTERNOON TEA.

On most afternoons in summer this fine promenade is crowded with ladies having tea with members.

delighted the aristocratic amazons of whom Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes so amusingly in the extract quoted above. In the Lobby they are ever much in evidence, and they have special provision made for them in the arrangements of the dining-rooms. But, of course, their special province is the Terrace. That noble promenade has become as recognised a rendezvous of society as the Lawn at Ascot or the Ladies' Mile in Hyde Park. The Terrace season reaches its height when the summer days are long and warm, and the strawberry is at its best. Then fair constituents of members resort there in their hundreds, and the gayest of gay scenes is presented. Imagine the long promenade crowded throughout a great part of its length with ladies dressed in the height of fashion, some seated at tables with huge mounds of strawberries and cakes before them. Imagine a line of members, young and old, lining the Terrace wall and viewing with undisguised interest the scene as they discuss their cigars and cigarettes. Imagine, further, a sparsely occupied expanse of Terrace at one end, heavily barricaded from the remainder and further protected by the legend "For Members only," and you will have some notion of what the Terrace is like in high summer. Members at this place and at these times seem to find their duties sit lightly upon them. But it is merely appearance. Immediately the division bells ring, and the stentorian tones of the police constables on duty announce that a division has been called, there is a scamper on their part for the door. Gradually the company thins out, until the ladies are left in almost exclusive occupation of the promenade. The desertion of them, however, is but temporary. The return movement soon sets in, and before the night is much further advanced parties are being formed for that most delightful of experiences, a dinner at the House. The sun has gone down, and a myriad lights sparkle on the surface of the great river as it flows by, carrying on its bosom some belated barge which is taking advantage of the bright summer night to get to the end of its journey. From the bridge which spans the river at the extreme end of the Terrace comes in a soft murmur the noise of the ceaseless traffic, and now and again the sounds of merry laughter float across the waterway from the Embankment opposite. Fashionable London has many brilliant things to offer its votaries, but none more interesting than an evening such as we have described on the Terrace.



## CHAPTER X.

### *MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S (Continued)—THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.*

AFTER our somewhat long digression to elucidate some of the lighter aspects of Parliamentary life, we may resume our survey of the stage of old St. Stephen's. When we left Parliament it had emerged from the troubled waters of the Revolutionary period and well embarked upon a career of constitutional progress. The promise of peaceful times was not belied. In fact, nothing hardly could be more striking than the contrast between the Parliamentary history of the seventeenth and that of the eighteenth century. One was pre-eminently a period of action; the other was as distinctively an era of talk—brilliant, weighty, enthralling declamation, but still talk. The change was a natural outcome of the events of the Rebellion and of the Revolution, which had left the Constitution so clearly and rigidly defined, and had placed in the hands of Parliament such wide power, that serious disputes with the Crown of the old type had been rendered almost impossible. The growth of the party system promoted the development. Oratory, which had hitherto played but an occasional part in the routine work of Parliament, now had its place as a regular and indispensable feature of the machinery of administration. It was the touchstone of popularity, and in process of time became the test of statesmanship.

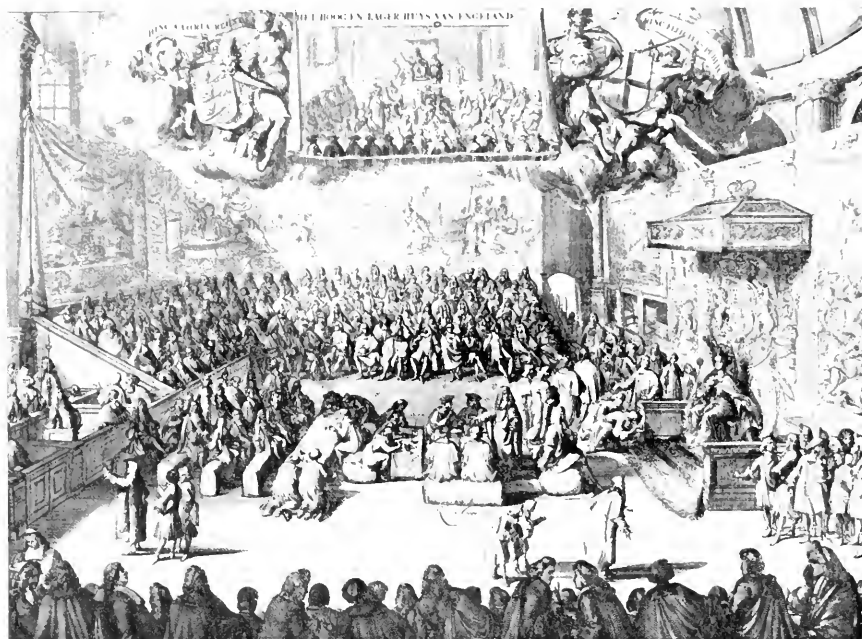
In the Parliamentary annals of the earliest years of the century, the names which most command attention are those of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, and Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke. The two men were closely associated in political work for a good many years, but they were singularly unlike. Harley lacked most of the qualities essential in a Parliamentary leader. "To the end of his life," says Macaulay, "he remained a tedious, hesitating, and confused speaker. He had



*From the painting by Sir G. Kneller in the National Portrait Gallery.*

ROBERT HARLEY, EARL OF OXFORD,

The well-known statesman of the reign of Queen Anne, impeached for treason and acquitted in the reign of George I.



OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY QUEEN ANNE.

A curious Dutch picture, in which the artist has allowed himself considerable licence.

none of the external graces of an orator. His countenance was heavy, his figure mean and somewhat deformed, and his gestures uncoth." St. John, on the other hand, was a profoundly eloquent speaker, endowed with personal graces which gave him remarkable ascendancy in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, of his brilliant oratory only the tradition survives. Professional Parliamentary reporting in any form was unknown in his day, and there were no amateurs, like the industrious D'Ewes of an earlier generation, to help to supply the deficiency. Hence we have to take his gifts as a speaker on trust; but that his reputation was not undeserved is shown by the extraordinary impression he created by his speeches. Brougham says that it was the contemplation of the chasm in the records of the Parliamentary debates of the earlier part of the seventeenth century that "made Mr. Pitt, when musing upon its brink, and calling to mind all that might be fancied of the orator from the author, and all that traditional testimony had handed down to us, sigh after a speech of Bolingbroke—desiderating it far more than all that has perished of the treasures of the ancient world."

These two men between them ruled the House of Commons during the reign of Queen Anne, the one by the virtue of the supreme quality of tact, and the other by his personal gifts and eloquence. They shared a common fate when, on the elections to the first Parliament of George I., the Whigs came into power with an immense majority. Impeached at the Bar of the House for their conduct of the negotiations for peace with France, Oxford was committed to the Tower, there to languish for some years, while Bolingbroke escaped a like fate by fleeing to the Continent, to commence a long life of exile. Two other eminent names that are identified with this period are those of Addison and Steele, the brilliant essayists. Equally gifted as writers, they contrasted strikingly as





speakers. Addison is believed to have made but one speech in the whole of his Parliamentary career. That was when he sat in the Irish Parliament as member for Cavan in 1709. The effort was a comical failure. "On a motion before the House," says an Irish writer, "Addison rose, and having said 'Mr. Speaker, I conceive,' paused, as if frightened by the sound of his own voice. He again commenced: 'I conceive, Mr. Speaker,' when he stopped, until roused by cries of 'Hear! hear!' when he once more essayed with 'Sir, I conceive.' Power of further utterance was denied, so he sat down amidst the scarce suppressed laughter of his brother members, which soon burst forth when a witty senator said: 'Sir, the honourable gentleman has just conceived three times, and brought forth nothing.'" Steele, on the other hand, had oratorical qualities which would have brought him fame quite independent of his writings. He was witty and endowed in a high degree with the power of good-humoured badinage, so effective in a popular chamber. One of the best remembered of his sallies is his

description of the House of Commons on the accession of George I. as a body "consisting very much of silent people oppressed by the choice of a great deal to say, and of eloquent people ignorant that what they said was nothing to the purpose."

His first essay in the rôle of a legislator was, however, unpromising. Entering Parliament in 1714, he felt constrained on the opening day of the session—February 14th—to raise his voice in condemnation of the Bill of Commerce between Great Britain and France, which was then a burning political question. He described the measure as "most pernicious," and referring to Sir Thomas Hanmer, whose influence had secured the rejection of the scheme in the previous session, said: "I rise up to do him honour and distinguish myself by giving him my vote for that his inestimable service to his country." The remarks were like a red rag to a bull in the Tory House of Commons in which he found himself. But the reception given to his remarks is best described by Steele himself in his "Vindication." "It will be impossible," he wrote, "for the reader to conceive how this speech of his was received, except he has happened to have been at a cock-match, and seen the triumph and exaltation which is raised when a volatile, whose fall was some way gainful to part of the company, has been necked. At the mention of the Bill of Commerce the cry began: at calling it increased; at the words 'do him honour' it grew insupportably loud; but having no reason for being confounded for other people's folly or absurdity, Mr. Steele bore the insolence well enough to speak out what he intended. He had hardiness enough to do it, from a resolution which he had taken to govern himself by when he went into the House, which was to prefer the fame of an honest man to that of an orator. . . . Mr. Steele does not attribute this particular



*From the National Portrait Gallery.*

JOSEPH ADDISON,

Essayist and statesman, Secretary of State in the reign of George I.

outrage to the House any further than they ought to have suppressed it, and severely observed upon it by turning out the offenders, who, it is supposed, were a parcel of rustics who crowded in with the members before the election of the Speaker, from a received error that there is no authority in the House till he is chosen. As he came out of the House he could hear nothing but those loud critics talking to one another: 'Oh! it is not so easy a thing to speak in the House.' 'He fancies because he can scribble,' and the like deep animaldiversions."

Steele was not long allowed to enjoy even the restricted measure of his triumph meted out to him on his debut in St. Stephen's. Almost immediately a charge was concocted against him of writing a libel on the Ministry in a pamphlet with the title of "The Crisis." Brought to the Bar with Sir Robert Walpole and General Stanhope, the Whig leaders, to support him and aid him with advice, Steele, according to one of his auditors, spoke for nearly three hours "with such temper, eloquence, and unconcern as gave entire satisfaction to all who were not prepossessed against him." The impression in his favour was strengthened by a singular incident recorded in Forster's essay on Steele. Lord Finch, who owed gratitude to Steele for having repelled in the *Guardian* a libel on his sister, got up to make a maiden speech in defence of his defender. "But bashfulness overcame him, and after a few sentences he sat down, crying out as he did so, 'It is strange I cannot speak for this man, though I could readily fight for him!'" Upon this such cheering rang through the House that suddenly the young lord took heart, rose again, and made the first of a long series of able and telling speeches." Of course, however (adds Forster), it did not save Steele, who was expelled by a majority of nearly a hundred in a House of four hundred members. Steele was subsequently again returned to Parliament, and amid more congenial surroundings made a considerable reputation as a speaker.

The great dominating personality in the House of Commons in the early half of the eighteenth century was that of Sir Robert Walpole. From the year 1702, when he was returned for King's

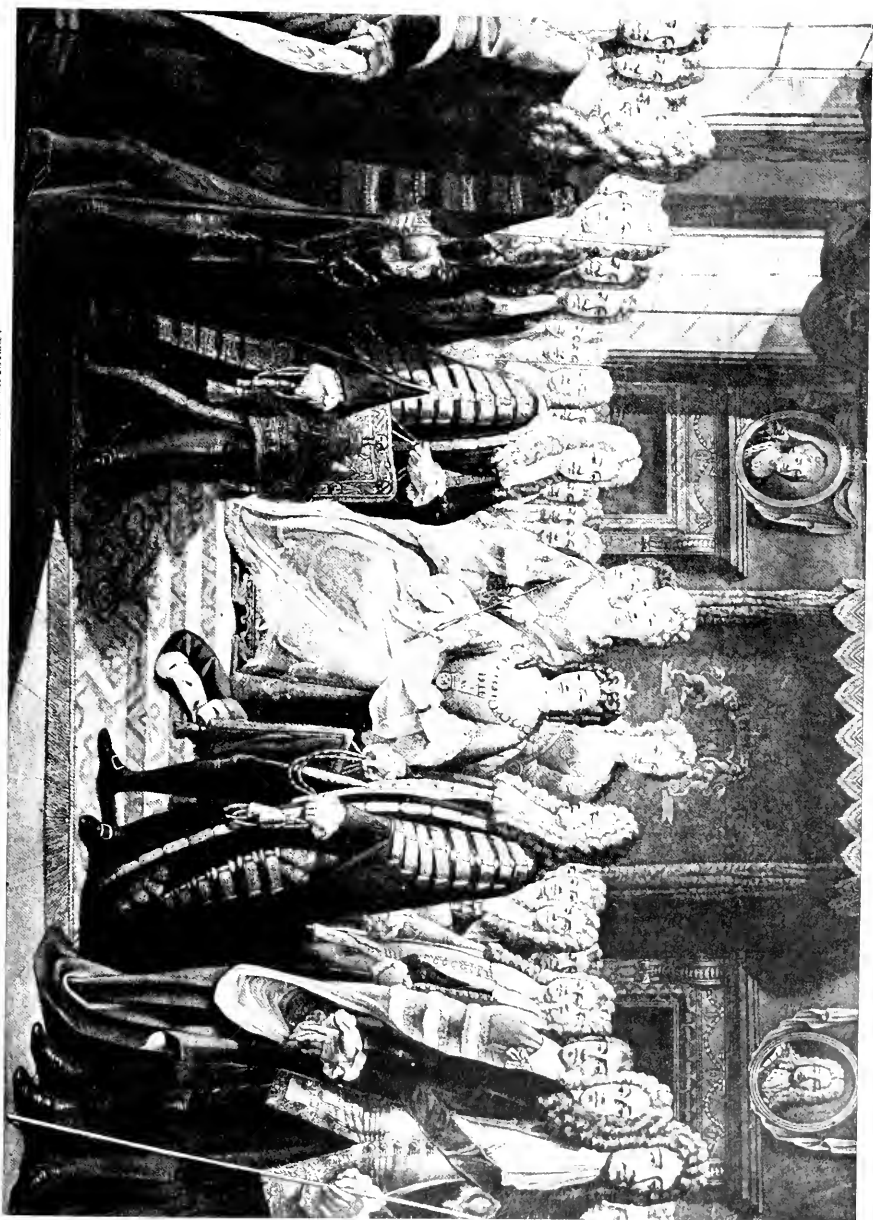
Lynn, until 1742, when he retired from public life, he filled a conspicuous place in the assembly at St. Stephen's. First of Prime Ministers in the sense that we understand the term, he held that office uninterruptedly for twenty-one years—a record that has never since been broken. Under his ægis the modern system of responsible government was built up. Recognising the changed conditions brought about by the limitations placed upon the power of the Crown, he skilfully evolved out of the materials to his hand a machinery of administration the motive force of which was a party majority maintained in the House by the manipulation of the constituencies with the aid of agencies not always legitimate. The Cabinet, though not of his creation, owes its present character largely to him. By his resignation in 1742, after the adverse vote on the Clippenham election petition, he established the important principle that a Minister who has lost the support of the House of Commons must no longer hold office. With all his faults, and they were many, he was undoubtedly a great statesman, who deserves to be held in honour by his countrymen.



From the National Portrait Gallery.

SIR RICHARD STEELE.

The brilliant wit, author, and politician, who was expelled from the House of Commons for his writings in 1744.



ARTICLES OF UNION PRESENTED BY COMMISSIONERS TO QUEEN ANNE, IN 1706.

Commissioners appointed by both the English and the Scotch Parliaments met in conference in 1706 at the 'Cafe' to deliberate upon the terms on which the Union with Scotland should be effected. It is the strong word finally settled which is here being submitted.

Walpole's qualities were of a diverse order. A great writer, an accomplished scholar, and a clever financier, he combined in his person the leading attainments which make for success as a popular administrator. But the true secret of his power is to be looked for in his profound insight into human character. The cynical remark popularly attributed to him—"All men have their price"—was never uttered by him in that sweeping form, but it represents not inaccurately his attitude of mind towards those with whom he had to deal. "A patriot, sir!" he exclaimed in his speech in vindication of his policy in 1741; "why, patriots spring up like mushrooms. I could raise fifty of them within the four and twenty hours. I have raised many of them in one night. It is but refusing to gratify an unreasonable or an insolent demand, and up starts a patriot!" This cynicism of temperament was constitutional. Dealing with a corrupt and venal crew in an age of extraordinary laxity in public morals, he could not believe it possible that men acted from disinterested motives. Pope makes allusion to this foible of his in these lines:

Seen him I have, but in his happier hour  
Of social pleasure, ill exchanged for power;  
Seen him unencumbered with the venal tribe,  
Smile without art, and win without a bribe.  
Would he oblige me? let me only find  
Heedoes not think me what he thinks mankind.

Inseparably associated with Walpole's Parliamentary career was that of his great rival William Pulteney. The Titanic oratorical combats between the two leaders remain, after the

lapse of close upon two centuries, amongst the greatest of Parliamentary traditions. Pulteney's powers as a debater were vividly sketched by Speaker Onslow, who had the best opportunity of forming an opinion upon them. Pulteney had, he said, "the most popular parts for public speaking that I ever knew; animating every subject of popularity with the spirit of fire that the orators of the ancient commonwealths governed the people by; was as classical and eloquent in the speeches he did not prepare as they were in the most studied compositions; mingling wit and pleasantry, and the application even of little stories, so properly to affect his hearers that he would overset the best argumentation in the world, and win people over to his side, often against their own convictions, by making ridiculous the truths they were influenced by before, and making some men to be afraid and ashamed of being thought within the meaning of some bitter expression of his, or within the laugh that generally went through the town at any memorable stroke of his wit."



*From the National Portrait Gallery.*

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,

The great statesman, who was Prime Minister for twenty-one successive years.





*From an engraving of the petition by Boparth and Sir James Thornhill.*

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN SIR ROBERT WALPOLE'S ADMINISTRATION.

The Right Hon. Arthur Onslow is in the chair, Sir Robert Walpole at his right hand. He is shown wearing the blue Robe and of the Order of the Garter.

One of the most remarkable of the conflicts of the two Parliamentary gladiators was over Walpole's famous Excise Bill in 1733. The measure was received with extreme hostility in the City, and Pulteney and his associates, recognising their opportunity, did their utmost, with unbounded success, to fan the flames of public discontent. In the debate Widdham compared Walpole to Empson and Dudley, "who had the misfortune to outlive their master, but whose son, as soon as he came to the throne, took off both their heads"—an allusion



"THE ORIGIN AND ESSENCE OF A GRAND EXCISE."

Satirical print suggested by the ferment over Walpole's Excise Bill. The view shows the entrance to the old House of Commons, and represents Walpole leaving the House exclaiming, "It must and shall pass."

of Sir Epicure Mammon in *The Alchemist*. He was gulled of his money by fine promises; he was promised the philosopher's stone, by which he was to get mountains of gold, and everything else he could desire; but all ended at last in some little thing for curing the itch."

Walpole was singularly puzzled by the allusion to Empson and Dudley in Windham's speech, and had to refer to Sir Phillip Yorke, the Attorney-General, who sat beside him, before he quite grasped who those historical characters were. His reply, however, lacked nothing in effectiveness. He trusted that those present would think that it was very unjust to draw any parallel between those notorious individuals and himself. If his character should ever come to be like theirs, he would deserve their fate. "I know," he remarked, "that my political and Ministerial life has by some gentlemen been long wished at an end; but they may ask their disappointed hearts how vain their wishes have been; and as for my natural life, I have lived long enough to be easy about parting with it."

In the end Walpole carried his measure by a majority of sixty-one, in one of the fullest Houses ever known. Popular excitement, which throughout had run exceedingly high during the debates, reached boiling point when the result was known. The precincts of the House were thronged with a howling mob—"sturdy beggars" Walpole contemptuously termed them in a historic phrase—whose attitude was so menacing to Walpole as he went through Westminster Hall to his carriage that only the prompt action of his companion, Henry Pelham, who, drawing his sword, dared the rioters to attack, saved him from actual and personal violence. After further debate and divisions, in which the majority steadily dwindled, Walpole discreetly withdrew the Bill. He declared that he would never be the Minister to enforce taxes at the expense of blood.

Equanimity of temper was a marked characteristic of Walpole. Pulteney, in a conversation with Dr. Johnson, once stated that his rival was of a temper so calm and equal, and so hard to be provoked, that he was very sure he never felt the bitterest invectives against him for

which was keenly enjoyed by Frederick, Prince of Wales, a bitter enemy of Walpole, who occupied a seat under the gallery. Pulteney's own speech sparkled with the peculiar humour of which he was master. Walpole, he said, had of late been mighty bountiful and liberal in his offers to the public. "He has been so gracious as to ask us 'Will you have a land tax of two shillings in the pound, a land tax of one shilling in the pound, or will you have no land tax at all? Will you have your debts paid? Will you have them soon paid? Tell me but what you want, let me but know how you can be made easy, and it shall be done for you.' These are very generous offers, but there is something so very extraordinary, so farcical, in them, that really I can hardly mention them without laughing. It puts me in mind of the story



*From the painting by Sir J. Reynolds, P.R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.*

WILLIAM PULTENEY, EARL OF BATH.

Walpole's great rival; famed for his oratorical powers and his gift of brilliant repartee.

half an hour. Confirmation of this view of Walpole's character is to be found in the following singular incident related by Coxe in his "Life of Walpole": "On February 11th, 1741, Sandys informed Walpole in the House of Commons that he should on the following Friday bring an accusation of several articles against him. The Minister, who received the accusation with great dignity and composure, immediately arose, thanked him for his notice, and after requesting a candid and impartial hearing, declared that he would not fail to attend the House, as he was not conscious of any crime to deserve accusation. He laid his hand on his breast, and said with some emotion: 'Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpa.'"

Pulteney observed that the right honourable gentleman's logic and Latin were equally inaccurate, and declared he had misquoted Horace, who had written "*nulla pallescere culpa.*" The Minister defended his quotation, and Pulteney repeating his assertion, he offered a wager of a guinea. Pulteney accepted the challenge, and referred the decision of the dispute to the Minister's friend, Nicholas Harlinge, Clerk of the House, a man distinguished for classical



THE GUINEA LOST BY WALPOLE TO PULTENEY IN  
A BET MADE IN THE HOUSE.

imperturbability is mentioned by Horace Walpole in his "Reminiscences." "At the time of the Preston rebellion," states this writer, "a Jacobite who sometimes furnished Sir Robert with intelligence, sitting alone with him one night, suddenly put his hand into his bosom and, rising, said: 'Why do not I kill you now?' Walpole, starting up, replied: 'Because I am a younger man and a stronger.' They sat down again and discussed the person's information; but Sir Robert afterwards had reasons for thinking that the spy had no intention of assassination, but had hoped to extract money from him."

The introduction of the resolution by Mr. Sandys referred to above marked the beginning of the end of Walpole's career in the House of Commons. For some years before, the Minister's power had been undergoing a process of disintegration. He had incurred considerable odium by his pacific policy abroad, and his position had been greatly weakened by attacks made upon him, conspicuously by William Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, who, entering the House in 1735, had early given evidence of his commanding genius by speeches of a vigour and eloquence remarkable even in that era of splendid oratory. In 1739 an address in favour of the convention just concluded with Spain was carried by only twenty-eight votes in a full House, and the division was followed by an extraordinary scene, culminating in the withdrawal of the Opposition in a body. Thereafter, Walpole was compelled by the pressure of public opinion to declare war against Spain, and the operations proving disastrous, he was called upon to bear the discredit of a policy which he had pursued against his better judgment. The imposition of heavy financial burdens to cover the cost of the war in the session of 1740 prepared the way for his downfall. In the debate on Sandys' motion, in February, 1741,

erudition. Hardinge decided against Walpole; the guinea was immediately thrown to Pulteney, who caught it, and holding it up to the House, exclaimed: "It is the only money I have received from the Treasury for many years, and it shall be the last." Pulteney carefully preserved the coin, and it ultimately found its way to the Coin Room of the British Museum, where it may now be seen, with an inscription in the handwriting of Pulteney setting forth the circumstances under which the bet was made.<sup>1</sup>

A still more striking instance of Walpole's

"At the time of the Preston rebellion," states this writer, "a Jacobite who sometimes furnished Sir Robert with intelligence, sitting alone with him one night, suddenly put his hand into his bosom and, rising, said: 'Why do not I kill you now?' Walpole, starting up, replied: 'Because I am a younger man and a stronger.' They sat down again and discussed the person's information; but Sir Robert afterwards had reasons for thinking that the spy had no intention of assassination, but had hoped to extract money from him."

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From the portrait by W. Hoare, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY PELHAM,

Friend and follower of Walpole; a leading member of the Pelham Administration.

<sup>1</sup> This is probably the only instance in which a bet was publicly made in the House of Commons, but sporting transactions of this character over events happening in the Legislative Chamber are common enough. At the present time a new silk hat is the favourite wager. A member now in the House has framed in his library a cheque for twenty-five shillings which Mr. Chamberlain sent him, the cost of a hat which the statesman had wagered and lost.



From a drawing by W. Hogarth.

GEORGE BUBB DODINGTON, LORD  
MELCOMBE.

A well-known politician, whose diary is one  
of the classics of political literature.

was sitting next to the Prince of Wales, who was in the House of Commons to hear the debate, a member was brought in who had lost the use of his limbs. 'So,' says the Prince, 'I see you bring in the lame, the halt, and the blind.' 'Yes,' replied the General; 'the lame on our side and the blind on yours.' When the division was called it was found that in a House of 508 members—the fullest ever known—Ministers only had a majority of three. After this the end could plainly not be far off. It came on a series of divisions on a disputed point in connection with the Chippenham election petition, which left the Government in a minority, in the last of the divisions, of sixteen. Walpole immediately resigned, and was created Earl of Orford, with an additional pension of £4,000 a year. His leave-taking of the King was highly affecting. "On kneeling down to kiss the King's hand his Majesty burst into tears, and the ex-Minister was so moved with that instance of regard that he continued for some time in that posture; and the King was so touched that he was unable to raise him from the ground. When he at length rose, the King testified his regret for the loss of so faithful a counsellor, expressed his gratitude for his long services, and his hopes of receiving advice on important occasions."<sup>1</sup> A determined effort was made by Walpole's political enemies to call him to criminal account for his actions, but skilful Parliamentary manœuvring on the part of his friends turned the attack aside. The strenuous efforts he had been called upon to make had, however, undermined his strength. In 1745 he expired at his country house in Norfolk, whither he had retired after his fall. Meanwhile, his implacable opponent, Pulteney, had retired to that "hospital of invalids, the House of Peers," as he once called it, and in so doing had greatly injured his reputation as a popular leader. A reference to this decline of his influence is contained in a satirical ballad of the time:—

Great Earl of Bath, your reign is o'er;  
The Tories trust your word no more,  
The Whigs no longer fear ye;

Your gates are seldom now unbar'd,  
No crowds of coaches fill your yard,  
And scarce a soul comes near ye.

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's "Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole," vol. i. p. 636.

It is said that Pulteney owed his earldom to Walpole. "I remember," says Horace Walpole, "my father's action and words when he returned from Court and told me what he had done—I have turned the key of the closet on him," making that motion with his hand." Pulteney had some inkling, probably, of the origin of his title, for when he received the patent of his creation he threw it on the floor and trampled on it. He outlived Walpole by nineteen years, but he never again figured prominently in politics, thus to some extent justifying a remark made by that statesman when he first met his old rival in the House of Lords—"My Lord Bath, you and I are now two as insignificant men as any in England."

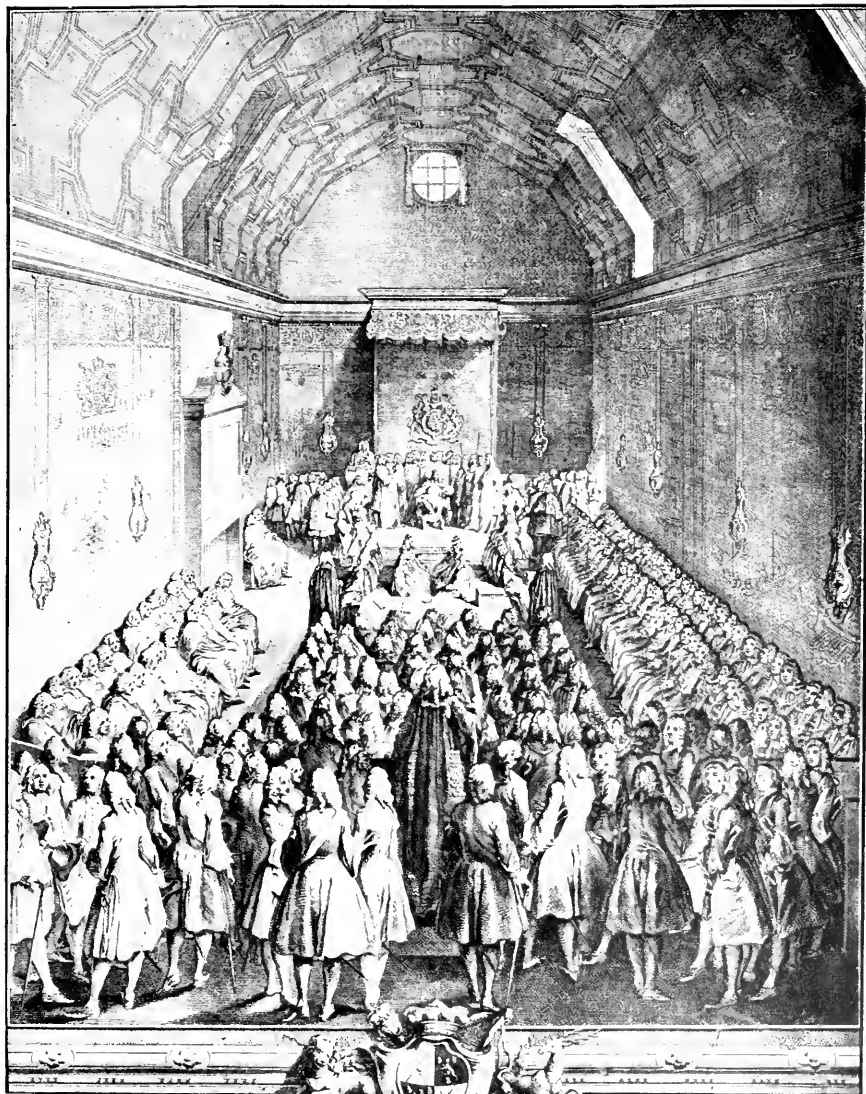
Not long after the termination of Walpole's active political career, the Government fell into the hands of the Pelhams (Henry Pelham and his brother, the Duke of Newcastle), whose ascendancy in the national councils extended almost uninterruptedly over a period of twenty years, dating from 1743. Of all the names which secured special prominence in the political history of the eighteenth century, these two, perhaps, have the least title to notice. Henry Pelham was a respectable mediocrity, well-meaning and industrious, but quite devoid of the qualities which are associated with the highest statesmanship. His brother, who on his death in 1754 succeeded him in the Premiership, is best described in Macaulay's scathing language: "He was a living, moving, talking caricature. His gait was a shuffling trot; his utterance a rapid stutter; he was always in a hurry; he was never in time; he abounded in fulsome caresses and in hysterical tears. His oratory resembled that of Justice Shallow. It was nonsense effervescent with animal spirits and impertinence." Savage as the picture is, it is not on the whole unjust. Never has there been a Premier who attracted to himself so much ridicule and contemptuous criticism. Henry Pelham was by far the abler man, but he never rose above the level of commonplace. His policy was uninspired, and the lack of genius was not compensated for by any commanding personal attractions. He appears the less in history as it was during his tenure of power that the restrictions against the reporting of the debates were in greatest force. Personally he would have given the reporters a fairly free hand. "Let them alone," he remarked on one occasion, "they will make better speeches for us than we can make for ourselves." These sentiments, however, were not those of the majority, and consequently our knowledge of this period in Parliamentary history is limited. One interesting incident associated with Pelham's name has, however, been handed down by Cox in his "History of the Pelham Administration." According to the biographer, during the early years of Pelham's career at St. Stephen's he stood out boldly as a defender of Walpole against Pulteney's attacks. On one occasion so heated were his attacks on the Opposition leader that a duel was made imminent. "After a short conversation, in which a challenge is supposed to have been given, Mr. Pulteney quitted the House, and Mr. Pelham rose up to follow him, but some common friends interposing, the Speaker ordered the Sergeant-at-Arms to summon Mr. Pulteney to return. In the meantime it was resolved by the House 'that they be enjoined not to prosecute any quarrel, or show any further resentment for what had passed between them.' Mr. Pulteney having returned, the Speaker acquainted him with the injunction, after which the two members stood up in their places to explain; but the



*Portrait by George Kneller in 1732.*

**HORACE WALPOLE, FOURTH EARL OF ORFORD.**

A great political writer and art connoisseur. He was third son of Sir Robert Walpole.

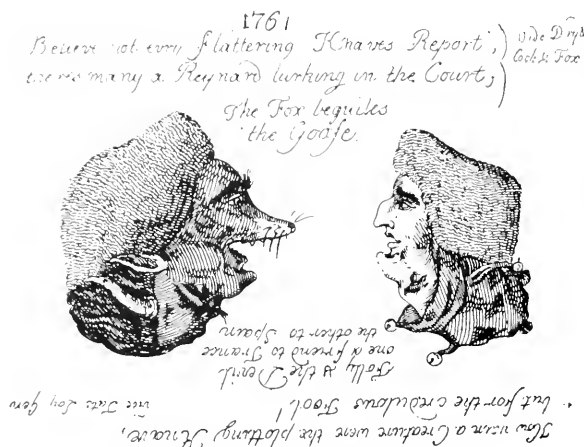


Engraved by John P.



INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS IN 1742.

The Speaker of the House of Commons attending to hear the Royal assent to a bill.



THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE AND LORD HOLLAND.

A satirical electioneering cartoon—one of the first of the kind ever published.

he resolutely declined to listen to the importunities of the landed interest to lower the tax, on the ground that any interference with the impost would seriously disturb the financial equilibrium, and that, moreover, a reduction was unnecessary because of the recent rise in the value of land. Pelham's views were supported by the great majority of members, to the disgust of the malcontent Tory squires, who, in revenge for the Minister's attitude, circulated this *bon mot* devised from the famous epitaph on Vaulbrugh:—

Lie heavy on him, land, for he  
 Laid many a heavy load on thee.

Pelham died in 1754 under circumstances which created considerable confusion in the public service. It would be putting a strain upon truth, however, to say that his loss was a serious one from the standpoint of the public interest. The time, at all events, was passing away when political power was of a necessity solely centred in the hands of men of mediocre attainments.

As has already been noted, some time before Walpole and Pulteney had disappeared from St. Stephen's Chapel a new luminary of dazzling splendour, in the person of Pitt, had risen upon the political firmament. "We must muzzle that terrible cornet of horse," Walpole, with instinctive perception

explanation not being deemed sufficiently satisfactory, they were required to be more explicit, and accordingly they declared that they would obey the order of the House." The episode illustrates strikingly the political manners of the time; it also throws a curious sidelight on the disciplinary measures which were occasionally resorted to to restrain hot-headed partisans. The personal courage which Pelham showed on this occasion, and also in the attack on Sir Robert Walpole in Westminster Hall, was not wanting in his administrative acts. In 1752, when the question of the reduction of the land tax was a burning one,



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

The view shows the growth of buildings about the Chapel.





*From a drawing by W. Hoare, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.*

THOMAS PELHAM HOLLES, DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, K.G.,

A prominent statesman in the reigns of George I. and George II.; Prime Minister from 1754 to 1762.

of Pitt's great powers, had said when he first appeared in the Parliamentary arena. But the process was too difficult a one even for the shrewd old Minister, with all his skill and knowledge of men. Inspired with high hopes and great ideals, free from sordid ambitions, and filled with a holy indignation at the corruption of the age, "the terrible cornet of horse" was irrepressible. Swiftly, and without a check, he pushed his way along the road to Parliamentary fame until he occupied a position of eminence such as no other statesman before or since has held. Macaulay, in his essay on Chatham, supplies us with an inimitable pen picture of the great man as he was when he first entered Parliament. "His figure," says the historian, "was strikingly graceful and commanding, his features high and noble, his eye full of fire. His voice, even when it sank to a whisper, was heard to the remotest benches; and when he strained it to its full extent, the sound rose like the swell of an organ of a great cathedral, shook the House with its peal, and was heard through lobbies and down staircases to the Court of Requests and the precincts

of Westminster Hall. He cultivated all these eminent advantages with the most assiduous care. His action is described by a most malignant observer as equal to that of Garrick. His play of countenance was wonderful; he frequently disconcerted a hostile orator by a single glance of indignation or scorn. Every tone, from the impassioned cry to the thrilling aside, was perfectly at his command. It is by no means improbable that the pains he took to improve his great personal advantages had in some respects a prejudicial operation, and tended to nourish in him that passion for theatrical effect which was one of the most conspicuous blemishes in his character."

Pitt's first speech in the House was delivered on April 29th, 1736, a little more than a year after he entered Parliament as member for Old Sarum. It was a complimentary oration in support of an address to the King felicitating him upon the marriage of the Prince of Wales. The enthusiastic championship of the Prince, who was in a very real sense "agin the Government" at the time, coupled with Pitt's determined opposition to the Ministerial measures, aroused Walpole's deep resentment. In order to silence "the terrible cornet of horse," he deprived him of his commission; but he had reckoned without his man. So far from this arbitrary action keeping Pitt silent, it only stimulated the fire of his zeal against the party in power. A series of most damaging attacks were delivered by him against Walpole, all marked by a brilliancy and argumentative effectiveness quite uncommon even in those days

of splendid oratory. One incident of this period is historic: it is the oratorical duel between him and Horace Walpole on March 10th, 1740. There are several versions of this to be found in the political literature of the period. That which is best known, and which is the most fictitious, is the one which figures in Candler's "Debates," much of the material for which was drawn from the tainted sources to which Johnson was a prolific contributor. A reference to this report may be made, both to illustrate the manner of the old garbled Parliamentary reports and to show the genesis of a phrase which has become classic.

On the day named a bill was before the House for "the encouragement of seamen" and "the speedier manning of the Navy." Pitt made a strong speech in opposition, and, according to Candler's "Debates," denounced "the tyrants of Administration" who amused themselves with "oppressing their fellow-subjects, who add one hardship to another, invade the liberty of those already overborne with taxes, . . . and who owe their power, not to their abilities, but to casual prosperity or to the influence of money." This brought up Horace Walpole, who delivered a sneering reply, in the course of which he observed: "Formidable sounds and furious declamation, confident assertions and lofty periods, may affect the young and inexperienced; and the honourable gentleman may have contracted his habits of oratory by conversing more with those of his own age than with such as have had more opportunities of communicating their sentiments." Allusion was further made to Pitt's vehement gestures,

and ridicule was poured upon his theatrical manner. Without a moment's hesitation, according to the authority quoted, Pitt jumped to his feet as soon as his critic had finished and made this reply: "The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honourable gentlemen has with such spirit and decency charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny, but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies will cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience. Whether youth can be imputed to any man as a reproach I will not assume the province of determining; but surely age may become justly contemptible if the opportunities which it brings have passed away without improvement, and vice appears to prevail when the passions have subsided. The wretch that, after having seen the consequences of a thousand errors, continues still to blunder, and whose age has only added obstinacy to stupidity, is surely the object of either abhorrence or contempt, and deserves not that his grey head should serve him."



*From the painting by W. Hay, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.*

WILLIAM PITT, FIRST EARL OF CHATHAM.

The great patriot, statesman, and Parliamentary orator.



*From the painting by W. Hoare, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.*

RICHARD GRENVILLE, EARL TEMPLE, K.G.,

Lord Privy Seal in the Administration of Lord Chatham.

Another and, it would appear, more plausible version of the episode is supplied by Warburton in his "Memoirs of Horace Walpole." This writer states that Walpole, having been severely handled by Pitt, Lyttelton, and the Grenvilles, all of whom were much his juniors, "lamented that though he had been so long in business, young men should be found so much better informed in political matters than himself. He added that he had at least one consolation in remembering that his own son, being twenty years of age, must be as much the superior of Pitt, Lyttelton, and the Grenvilles as they were wiser than himself. Pitt, having his youth thus mercilessly flung in his face, got up in a rage, commencing: 'With the greatest reverence to the grey hairs of the gentleman—'; but was stopped by Mr. Walpole pulling off his wig and disclosing a grizzled poll beneath. This excited very general laughter, in which Pitt joined with such heartiness as quite to forget his anger."

One of the finest of Pitt's earlier speeches was that delivered in the great debate in November, 1755, on the Address. Just before, the Duke of Newcastle had

coalesced with Henry Fox, afterwards Lord Holland, who had been appointed Secretary of State with the Leadership of the House. Pitt, smarting under a sense of injustice done him by this arrangement, made a speech of remarkable brilliancy. Horace Walpole, no mean judge, says of the effort that Pitt "surpassed himself," and he adds, "and then I need not tell you that he surpassed Cicero and Demosthenes." Unfortunately, only fragments of this great oration have been preserved. A passage which has survived, criticising the coalition of Newcastle and Fox, helps us to understand the impression that was made at the time by the speech. "I remember," said Pitt, with a dramatic gesture—"I remember that at Lyons I was taken to see the conflux of the Rhône and Saône—the one a gentle, feeble, languid stream, and though languid, of no depth; the other a boisterous and impetuous torrent; but different as they are, they meet at last, and long may they continue united, to the comfort of each other and the glory, honour, and security of this nation." The speech, as it was probably intended to do, cost Pitt his place in the Ministry. But in less than two years his transcendent abilities placed him in a position of supreme authority in the Ministry and unparalleled influence in the country.

In the debate in 1755 in which Pitt's great speech was delivered, there flashed meteor-like across the Parliamentary stage that singular genius, William Gerard Hamilton, who, on the strength of one brilliant oration, and one only, secured for himself a permanent place in Parliamentary annals. Horace Walpole describes the incident and the speaker in terms which indicate how extraordinary was the impression he created. "His speech," says the diarist, "was at once perfection; it was set and full of antitheses, but those antitheses were full of argument; and he broke through the regularity of his own composition, answered other people, fell into his own track again with the greatest ease. His figure is advantageous, his voice strong and clear, his manner spirited, and the whole with the ease of an established speaker. You will ask what could be beyond this? Nothing, but what was beyond whatever

was—and that was Pitt.” Splendid as the promise of the speech was, Hamilton’s Parliamentary career practically ended with it. An offer of a seat at the Board of Trade in the December following tempted him into a dignified obscurity, from which he never again emerged. We can only, therefore, surmise what might have been his portion had he followed the bent of his genius and striven to emulate the example of Pitt in his rapid progress up the ladder of fame.

Pitt’s power over the House of Commons was quite as much maintained by his talents as an actor as by the spell of his oratory. His capacity of suppressing a hostile critic with a single glance or scornful exclamation, to which Macaulay has referred, is exemplified by some amusing stories which have been handed down to us. Brougham tells one of the best in his “Statesmen of the Reign of George III.” Chatham “began a speech with the words, ‘Sugar, Mr. Speaker,’ and then, observing a smile to pervade the audience, he paused, looking fiercely around, and with a loud voice, rising in its notes and swelling into vehement anger, he is said to have pronounced again the word ‘Sugar!’ three times; and having thus quelled the House, and extinguished every appearance of levity or laughter, turned round and disdainfully asked, ‘Who will laugh at sugar now?’” Another illustration of Pitt’s imposing manner is furnished by an episode related by Charles Butler. The writer says that Mr. Moreton, the Chief Justice of Chester, happened to say in the House, “King, Lords, and Commons, or”—directing his eye towards Pitt—“as that right honourable gentleman would call them, Commons, Lords, and King.” “Pitt arose with great deliberation, and called to order. ‘I have,’ he said, ‘heard frequently in this House doctrines which have surprised me; but now my blood runs cold. I desire the words of the honourable member to be taken down.’ The Clerk of the House wrote the words. ‘Bring them to me,’ said Pitt in his loudest voice. By this time Mr. Moreton was frightened out of his senses. ‘Sir,’ he said, addressing himself to the Speaker, ‘I am sorry to have given any offence to the right honourable member or to the House. I meant nothing, King, Lords, and Commons; Lords, King, and Commons; Commons, Lords, and King; *tria juncta in uno*. I meant nothing; indeed I meant nothing.’ ‘I don’t wish to push the matter further,’ said Pitt loftily. ‘The moment a man acknowledges his error he ceases to be guilty. I have a great regard for the honourable member, and as an instance of that regard I give him this advice: whenever that member means nothing, I recommend him to say nothing.’”



THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM GERARD HAMILTON  
 ("Single-Speech Hamilton"), who made a great reputation in the House of Commons by an isolated utterance.

In general debate Pitt exercised the quality of polished sarcasm, used with such effect against the unfortunate Mr. Moreton, with not less power. A famous instance is supplied by what is known as his "Gentle Shepherd" speech. This was delivered in the debate on Dashwood's financial measures in 1762. A feature of the Budget was a tax on cider. Seizing this, Pitt delivered a vigorous philippic against the threatened invasion of the hearths and homes of the people by the exciseman. Grenville, in reply, said that if Pitt objected to a particular tax, he was bound to propose an alternative. "Let him tell me where taxes should be imposed," he said, and to clinch the argument repeated several times, "Let him tell me where." Starting up in his place and mimicking the whining tone of the speaker, Pitt said, in allusion to a popular song of the day, "Gentle shepherd, tell me where." The House was convulsed with laughter, and Grenville, in a high state of indignation, rose to protest against the treatment he had received. But his anger only served to fasten more surely



NEW PALACE YARD IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Showing Westminster Hall and, on the right, Westminster Abbey.

the incident on the public memory. For long after he was known by the nickname of "The Gentle Shepherd."

As an orator pure and simple, Pitt will be best remembered by his speeches in opposition to the extreme measures taken with the American colonies. The first of this noteworthy series of utterances was delivered in the House in January, 1766, on the riots which had accompanied the attempts to enforce the Stamp Act. The most brilliant passage is a reply to an accusation made by Grenville that the seditious spirit of the colonies was fomented by the factions at home. "Sir," said Pitt, "I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves would have been fit instruments to make slaves of all the rest. I come not here armed at all points with law cases and Acts of Parliament, with the Statute Book doubled down in dogs' ears, to defend the cause of liberty. . . . I know the valour of your troops. I know the skill of your officers. In a good cause, on a sound bottom, the force of this country can crush America to atoms, but in such a cause as this your success would be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like the strong man. She would embrace the pillars of the State and pull down the Constitution along with her. Is this your boasted peace—not to sheathe the sword in its scabbard, but to sheathe it in the bowels of your countrymen?" A few months after the delivery of this speech Pitt became Earl of Chatham, and the actual, though not the nominal, head of the Cabinet. Before he quitted St. Stephen's Chapel he had witnessed the entrance there of Edmund Burke, and had extended to that brilliant orator the tribute of a generous admiration at his maiden speech on the American troubles.

Some little time later was removed by death that volatile genius, Charles Townshend, Pitt's Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose "champagne speech" in May, 1767, constitutes perhaps the most astounding utterance ever delivered from the Treasury Bench. Horace Walpole, who states that Townshend was "half drunk" when he made the speech, describes the impression



*Engraved after the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

CHARLES TOWNSHEND, LORD CHATHAM'S CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

A witty speaker, but a man of ill-balanced judgment.

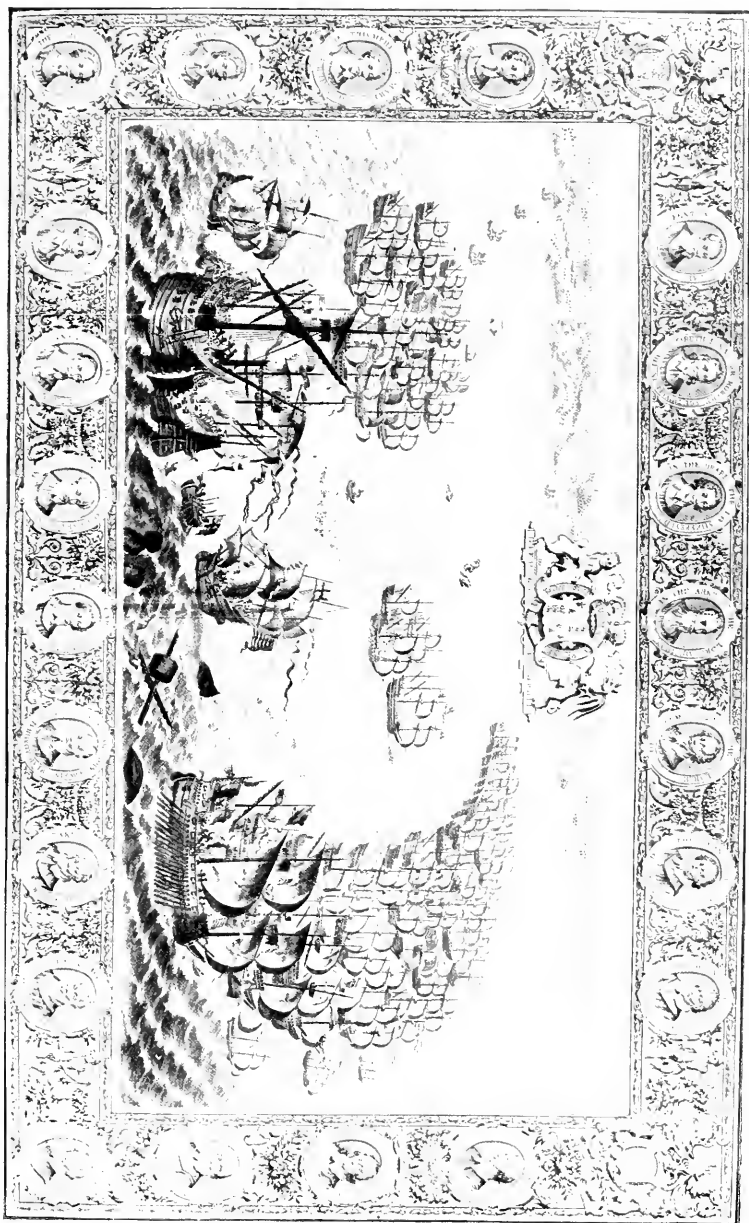
it created in his interesting way. "The speech lasted an hour, with torrents of wit, ridicule, vanity, lies, and beautiful language. Nobody but he could have made the speech; and nobody but he would have made it if they could. It was at once a proof that his abilities were superior to those of all men and his judgment below that of any man. It showed him incapable of being, and unfit to be, First Minister. The House was in a roar of rapture, and some clapped their hands with ecstasy, like an audience in a theatre." Townshend's death on September 4th, 1767, paved the way to Ministerial office for Lord North, whose connection with the American troubles will be dealt with subsequently.

Cribbed, cabined, and confined though Chatham's restless spirit was in the House of Lords, he contrived to render his membership of the august assembly memorable by his speeches on the American war. Amongst the examples of his eloquence which have come down to us there are none which are more familiar than the fragments of the glowing orations which he delivered at this period. Instinct with feeling and pervaded with the glow of a rich imagination, they are classic examples of the palmy period of Parliamentary oratory. One passage from the speech on the employment of Indian mercenaries

may be cited as a characteristic specimen of his style at its best. "I call," he said, "upon the spirit and humanity of my country to vindicate the national character; I invoke the genius of the Constitution. From the tapestry<sup>1</sup> that adorns these walls, the immortal ancestor of this noble earl (the Earl of Eftingham) frowns with indignation at the disgrace of his country. In vain he led your victorious fleet against the boasted Armada of Spain; in vain he defended and established the honour, the liberties, the religion—the Protestant religion—of this country against the arbitrary cruelties of Popery and the Inquisition; if these more than Popish cruelties and inquisitorial practices are let loose among us, to turn forth into our settlements, among our ancient connections, friends, and relations, the merciless cannibal thirsting for the blood of man, woman, and child!—to send forth the infidel savages—against whom? Your Protestant brethren, to lay waste their country, to desolate their dwellings, and extirpate their race and name!" Later on in the same speech, referring to the employment of foreign troops, Chatham used the historic words, "If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country I would never lay down my arms—never, never, never."

To the end the great statesman maintained an attitude of uncompromising hostility to the war. His dramatic last speech constitutes one of the most moving episodes in Parliamentary history. He had been seriously ill with the gout, and was recuperating at Hayes, when, hearing

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the famous tapestries which for so long were objects of interest to visitors to the old House of Lords. They were wrought in Holland at the expense of the great Earl of Nottingham, Lord High Admiral, whose defeat of the Spanish Armada established Elizabeth firmly on the throne. It was, however, not until 1650 during the Commonwealth that "the suit containing the story of 1581" was "ordered to be hung up in the late House of Lords." Chatham's keen interest in the celebrated pictures is shown in his private correspondence. Thus in a letter to the Countess Stanhope from Hayes on December 16th, 1770, he writes: "The labours within the House are now the labours of Hercules; for the House being of late kept clear of *houvers* [an allusion to the clearance of strangers], we are reduced to a snug party of unheating and unfedling lords and the tapestry hangings." Again (January 25th, 1771) he writes: "Past six; just returned from the tapestry." Yet again (on January 19th, 1775) he speaks of "meaning to look the tapestry and the bishops in the face to-morrow."



A SECTION OF THE WONDERFUL TAPESTRY HANGINGS WHICH ADORNED THE WALLS OF THE OLD HOUSE OF LORDS. The gift of the famous Earl of Nottingham, they depicted pictorially the defeat of the Spanish Armada, which he continued so lavishly to buy about. After remaining objects of admiration to generations of visitors to the House of Parliament, they were destroyed in the fire of 1834.

that the Duke of Richmond intended to move an address to the King to remove the fleet and army from America, he came post haste to London to take part in the debate. Swathed in flannels, and looking the ghost of his old self, he appeared in the Peers' chamber on the eventful 7th of April, 1778. After the Duke of Richmond had opened the debate, Chatham rose. "The Earl spoke," wrote Lord Camden to the Duke of Grafton at the time, "but was not like himself; his speech faltered, his sentences were broken, and his mind not master of itself. His words were shreds of unconnected eloquence and flashes of the same fire which he, Prometheus-like, had stolen from heaven, and were then returning to the place from whence they were taken." The Duke of Richmond answered Chatham. He rose to reply, but nature was exhausted. "He fell back," says Lord Camden, "upon his seat, and was to all appearance in the agonies of death. This threw the whole House into confusion; every person was upon his legs in a moment, hurrying from one place to another, some sending for assistance, others producing salts, and others reviving spirits; many crowding about the Earl to observe his countenance, all affected,



*After the painting by George Romney.*

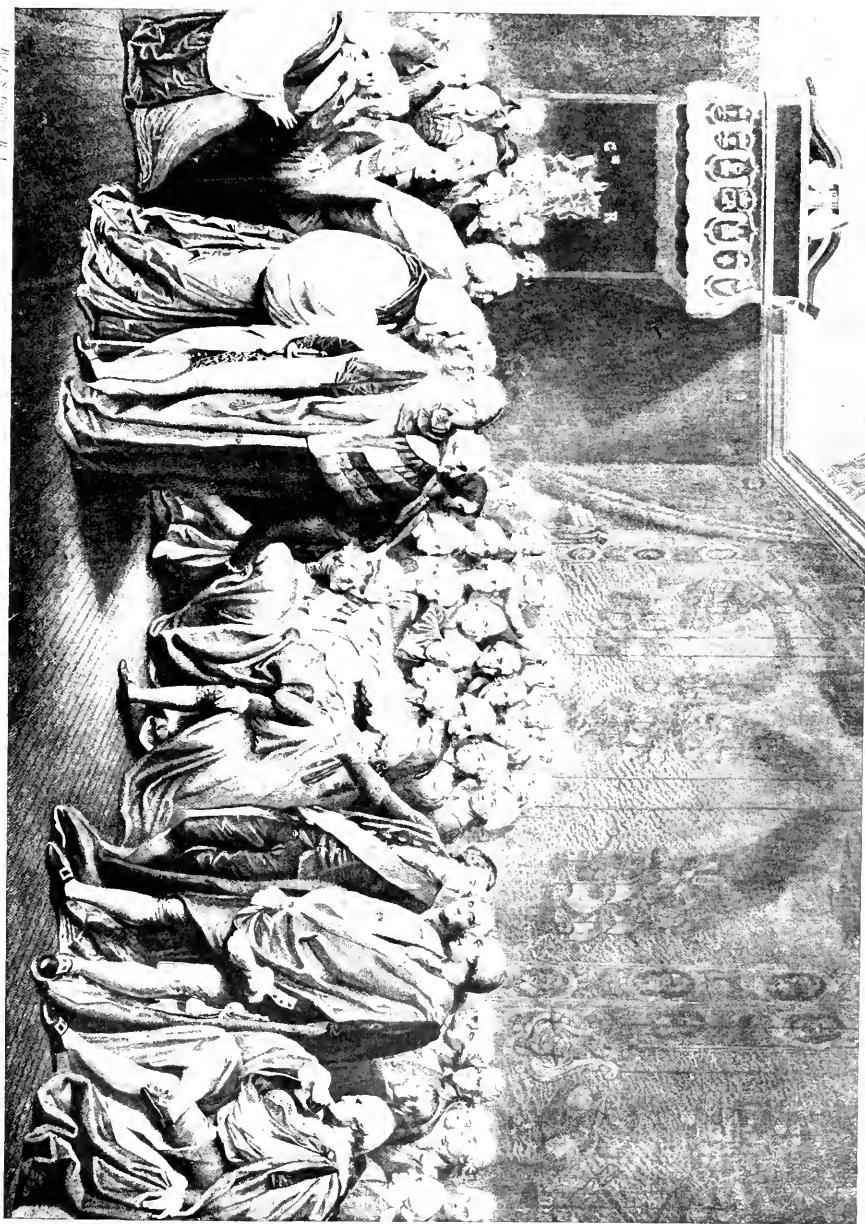
CHARLES LENNOX, THIRD DUKE OF RICHMOND,  
A leading figure in the House of Lords in Lord Chatham's time.

most part really concerned, and even those who might have felt a real pleasure in the accident yet put on the appearance of distress." The stricken peer was removed to the Prince's Chamber, and thence, after a brief sojourn at a house in Downing Street, to Hayes. But he never completely recovered from the attack. He expired on May 11th, in his seventieth year.

No reference to the great Parliamentary struggle in which Lord Chatham played so distinguished and honourable a part would be complete without some account of Lord North, the Minister who was charged with the execution of the ill-advised policy which the obstinacy of the King forced upon Parliament. North has been subjected probably to more abuse than any statesman of his century. Execration has spent itself in attacks on his memory. Yet there is hardly any figure in the Parliamentary history of the eighteenth century which is personally more likeable. A slumberous, plethoric man, he was the soul of good-humour. Nothing could disturb his equanimity, whether it was a disaster abroad or a rebuff in the House. Horace Walpole relates that the Duke of Newcastle, waiting on him at the

time of the Charlestown affair, intent on lamenting the miscarriage to our arms, and finding him in the highest of spirits, took notice of the circumstance. "Faith, my lord," replied Lord North, "if fretting would make me thin, I would be as sorry as your Grace; but since it will not have that effect, I bear it as well as I can." The same gossip records in his journal on January 27th, 1778, that "Charles Fox, in an admirable speech, attacked Lord North on having called himself an unfortunate Minister, and proved that all the disgraces had happened by ignorance, blunders, and misconduct, not by misfortune. Lord North answered with some humour, and as Fox had accused him of idleness and listening to flatterers, he said he passed a great deal of time in that House, where he could not be idle, and it was plain was not flattered." Another example of his good-humour is supplied by his treatment of a series of personal attacks which had given rise to much ill-feeling in the House. North deprecated the readiness to take offence which was evinced. "One member," he observed, "spoke of me as 'that thing called a Minister.' To be sure," he added, patting his huge form, "I am a





thing; the member, therefore, when he called me a thing, said what was true, and I could not be angry with him. But when he added 'that thing called a Minister,' he called me that thing which of all things he himself most wished to be, and therefore I took it as a compliment."

A weakness of North's was an inordinate love of sleep. In season and out of season he slumbered on the Treasury Bench, undisturbed by the hottest debates. The habit greatly exasperated his critics, who found their keenest shafts turned aside by the impenetrability of the armour he assumed. Brougham tells of one vehement declaimer, who, calling loudly for North's head, turned round and perceived his victim unconsciously indulging in a soft slumber, and, becoming still more exasperated, denounced the Minister as capable of sleeping while he ruined his country. North, awakened by the attack, merely complained how cruel it was he should be denied a solace which other criminals so often enjoyed—that of having a night's rest before execution. On another occasion an orator, to point his remarks on the iniquity of the Minister, said, "Even now, in the midst of these perils, the noble lord is asleep." "I wish to God I was," was North's rejoinder. In yet a further instance, when a tedious speaker with a load of historical reminiscence was on his legs, he asked a colleague to awaken him when he approached their own times. The summons in due course was given. "Where are we?" asked North. "At the battle of La Hogue, my lord." "Oh, my dear friend," he replied, "you have woke me a century too soon." The manner in which Lord North bore his fall was highly characteristic of the man. "On the evening when he announced his resignation to the House of Commons," says Earl Russell, "snow was falling, and the weather was bitterly cold. Lord North kept his carriage. As he was passing through the great-coat room of the House of Commons, many members (chiefly his opponents) crowded the passage. When his carriage was announced he put one or two of his friends into it; and then, making a bow to his opponents, said, 'Good-night, gentlemen. I have my carriage; it is the first time I have known the advantage of being in the secret.'"

Before the American war attained to the dimensions of a great national question, a striking and sinister figure had appeared on the Parliamentary stage in the person of John Wilkes. At this time of day it is difficult to realise the extraordinary influence which this politician exercised. A man devoid of talents, as he was of character, conspicuously repellent in his personal appearance, without birth or connections, he yet wielded a power over the people which some of the greatest statesmen could never lay claim to. "Wilkes and Liberty" was the rallying cry, not only of the rabble, but of the substantial business men of the City, who committed themselves to his cause with a wholeheartedness which they had never before shown for any individual. An oft-told story is that of Wilkes's election to the House in 1764, his expulsion for the libels contained in the famous No. 45 of the *North Briton*, his election for Middlesex four years later, his second expulsion, followed by further elections and expulsions until his final triumphant admission to the House in 1774. For years he and his concerns were prominent in Parliament—indeed, it may be doubted whether in the whole



ENTRANCE TO THE OLD HOUSE OF LORDS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

The conspicuous meanness of the architecture will be noted. The principal building shown in this picture is the Office of Ordnance.

range of Parliamentary history there is a case of a man who never held office, and who was not a leader of the regular Opposition, attaining to such notoriety as he did. In the House of Commons he was not unpopular. His unabashed cynicism quite disarmed hostility. Once, when standing on the hustings at Brentford, his opponent said to him, "I will take the sense of the meetings." "And I will take the nonsense," replied Wilkes, "and we shall see who has the best of it." It is also related of him in Lord Sidmouth's "Life" that he once went up to the Speaker and said that he had a petition to present to the House from "a set of the greatest scoundrels and miscreants on the face of the earth." A little while afterwards, when publicly called upon to present it, he said with the gravest face, "Sir, I hold in my hand a petition from a most intelligent, independent, and enlightened body of men." The demagogue always seemed to have his tongue in his cheek. He even laughed at himself. When attending a levée towards the end of his career he was asked by the King after his "friend," Serjeant Glynn. "Sir," observed Wilkes, "he is not a friend of mine; he was a Wilkite, which I never was."

A Parliamentary character of this period who deserves to be bracketed with Wilkes was Colonel Barré, a soldier of Wolfe's campaign hailing from Dublin, who, entering Parliament in 1762, was for a good many years a conspicuous though never a distinguished member. His oratory was of the robust order, charged with true Celtic fire. Ere he had been two days in the House he attracted attention by a violent attack on Pitt, then in the zenith of his career. Criticising the style of the great man's speeches, he said: "There he would stand, turning up his eyes to heaven that witnessed his perjuries, and laying his hand in a solemn manner upon the table—that sacrilegious hand that had been employed in tearing out the bowels of his mother country!" For a maiden effort this was striking, if nothing else. Its supreme audacity took away the breath of the House; but Pitt, with that hauteur which became him so well, sat unmoved under the torrent of abuse, allowing his contemptuous silence to give an effective answer to the tirade. Subsequently Barré was brought into intimate relations with the statesman he denounced with so much ill-regulated fervour, and a number of his letters, chiefly on the Wilkes case, figure in the published "Correspondence of the Earl of Chatham." One epistle may be singled out for special notice. It refers to the debate in the House of Commons on March 25th, 1771, on the motion to commit to the Tower for breach of privilege Alderman Oliver, who with Lord Mayor Crosby had signed the warrant for the arrest of the messenger despatched by the Speaker to the City to secure Wheble, the offending printer of the debates of the House. Barré describes the excitement which the discussion of the question aroused, and observes: "I spoke to the question about five minutes only, but I believe with great violence." The reports of the speech show that his belief was not without entire justification. "Listen!" said the indignant orator—"listen! for if you are not totally callous, if your consciences are not totally seared, I will speak daggers to your souls, and wake you to all the hells of guilty recollection. That I may not be a witness



LORD NORTH, AFTERWARDS SECOND EARL OF GUILFORD.  
George III.'s Minister who carried through the disastrous policy which led to the loss of the American colonies.

of this monstrous proceeding I will leave the House; nor do I doubt but every independent man will follow me. These walls are baleful, they are deadly, while a prostitute majority holds the bolt of Parliamentary omnipotence, and hurls its vengeance only upon the virtuous. To yourselves, therefore, I consign you. Enjoy your own pandemonium.

When vice prevails and impious men bear sway,  
The post of honour is a private station."

The sequel of this astounding speech is related by Barré in his communication to Lord Chatham. "I left the House," he wrote, "to its own discretion, and was followed by Mr. Dunning, Trecothick, Sir R. Bernard, Townshend, Sawbridge, Sir R. Clayton, and about seven or eight other members. As I walked down several of the Ministry called 'To the Bar!' but no man chose to put the question." This was not the sole instance in which Barré was the cause of uproar in the House. His fiery invective directed against Lord North brought about a violent "scene" in 1782 in one of the debates on the American war. On this occasion Lord North is said to have lost his temper almost for the first time in his life. In a white heat of passion he stigmatised Barré's language as uncivil, brutal, and insolent, and on being called to order for his language, said that he was prepared to ask pardon of the House, but not of Barré. Eventually, however, he was prevailed upon to make the necessary *amende* and the incident closed.

At the period of Lord North's fall Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox laid the foundations of their great reputations. Just previously there had joined them on the floor of the House two other young men who were each destined to win imperishable fame in Parliament. These were William Pitt, the younger, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. For the next twenty years or more the popular chamber was dominated by this brilliant galaxy of talent. Widely differing in

temperament and bent of genius, the four men shared in common a remarkable gift of oratory. Burke's attainments were the deepest and most scholarly, but he had perhaps the least weight with the House. The plain country squires and solid common-sense business men who constituted the bulk of the members little appreciated his carefully elaborated speeches, with their wealth of classical allusion and their gorgeous imagery. They did not always take the trouble to listen, and when they did they were not greatly moved by them. There was even at one period of Burke's career something like an organised effort to howl him down on the part of some of the younger and more intolerant members. One night, when the annoyance was particularly irritating, he stopped short in his argument, and put his enemies to discomfiture by saying that he could teach a pack of hounds to yelp with more melody and equal comprehension. Burke was more susceptible to the remark of an old country squire who exclaimed when he was preparing to speak, "I hope the honourable gentleman does not mean to read that large bundle of papers and bore us with a long speech into the bargain." So disconcerted was the orator by this interruption that he gathered together his papers and fled from



By W. Hoagland.

JOHN WILKES.

The demagogue, whose contests with the House of Commons over his right to sit in the popular chamber created such ferment in the middle of the eighteenth century.





Portrait of the Hon. John Bull, Esq. by Sir J. Smith, 1785.



"THE COMPLETE VERMIN CATCHER."

An old satirical print showing the Duke of Newcastle fishing for partisans in view of the general election of 1751. The line is dropped through the chimney of St. Stephen's Chapel and the hook is baited with "titles," "bribes," "pensions," etc. Candidates are galling in from all quarters to secure the good things.

the Legislative Chamber. One of the rare occasions on which Burke really touched the House was on February 6th, 1778, when he delivered his well-known speech on the subject of the employment of Indians in the American War. Horace Walpole states that "he drew such a pathetic picture of the cruelties of the King's army, particularly in the alleged case of a young woman on whose ransom, not beauty, they quarrelled, and murdered her, that he drew iron tears down Burr's cheeks, who implored him to print his speech, and said, with many invectives against the bishops, that it ought to be pasted up on every church under their proclamation for the fast, and that he himself would paste it upon some." Governor Johnstone, the diarist adds, stated that he was glad that strangers were excluded, as if they had been admitted, Burke's speech would have excited them to tear the Ministers to pieces as they went out of the House. Like Chatham, Burke was theatrical in his style, but he did not understand the art of effective gesture so well as "the Great Commoner." His famous "dagger speech" on December 28th, 1792, went perilously near being farcical by his clumsiness. Here is the description of the scene as related by Lord Sidmouth: "When Burke after only a few preliminary remarks, the House being totally unprepared, fumbled in his bosom, and suddenly drew out the dagger and threw it on the floor, his extravagant gesture excited a general disposition to titter, by which most men would have been disconcerted; but he, observing he had failed of making the intended impression, immediately collected himself for an effort, and by a few brilliant sentences recalled the seriousness of the House. 'Let us,' said he, 'keep French principles from our heads and French daggers from our hearts; let us preserve all our blandishments in life and all our consolations in death, all the blessings of time and all the hopes of eternity.'"

In keeping with this theatrical demonstration was a much earlier and less-known incident described by Lord Clive in a letter to Sir Matthew Fetherstonehaugh. It occurred in a debate on the affairs of the East India Company towards the close of 1766. Burke pointed out the ill effects that the measure before the House might have on the public credit. "But perhaps," said he, "this House is not the place where our reasons can be of any avail; the Great Person



COLONEL BARRÉ.

One of Wolfe's lieutenants, who gained a great reputation by his fiery oratory in the House of Commons.

Burke's oratory is too well known to need extensive illustration. No statesman before his time or since, with perhaps the sole exception of Lord Chatham, has had wider currency for his speeches. Their elaste style, burning eloquence, and wonderful command of vivid language have, despite—perhaps because—of their faults as spoken utterances, won for them a circle of cultured readers which never diminishes from one generation to another. The least sympathetic of youths is thrilled when he makes first acquaintance with the gems which sparkle with rare radiance in the great man's orations. The sublimity of the thoughts, not less than the splendour of the diction, rivets his attention, and gives him when he gets away from his books a memory of elevated and graceful conceptions which does not fade.

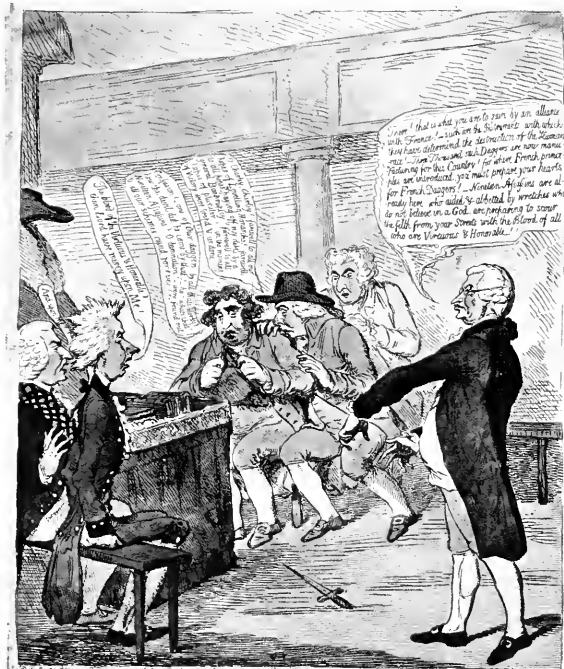
It is quite beyond the purpose of this work to follow Burke in detail through his long and memorable career in the House. For a quarter of a century or more he was in the front rank of Parliamentarians, and to adequately survey his actions on the floor of St. Stephen's would be to write the history of the crowded last quarter of the eighteenth century. Something will be said of his connection with the impeachment of Warren Hastings in another chapter. Meanwhile, his historic quarrel with Fox cannot be overlooked, because it supplies one of the most interesting of the memories which cluster about the ancient Chapel. The cause of the rupture was the pronounced line which Burke took in regard to the French Revolution. As he spoke strongly, so he felt strongly, for the victims of the infamies of the Terror. Therefore, when in 1791 Fox in the course of a debate on the Canada Bill cast some reflections on the recent writings of Burke on the subject of the Revolution, a barrier was created between the two old political friends of a formidable kind. The difference was accentuated by the ill-advised conduct of some of Fox's followers, who, when Burke, with signs of strong emotion upon him, got up to defend his principles, practically shouted him down. This treatment was repeated on a subsequent day under circumstances which are vividly described by Earl Stanhope in one of his works. "When, on May 6th, Burke rose in his place," says the noble author, "and was proceeding with solemn earnestness to inveigh against the evil and the error of the French Revolution, there appeared a fixed design to interrupt him. Member after member of his own

who is to determine this question may be a being far above our view, one so immeasurably high that the greatest abilities (pointing to Mr. Townshend) or the most amiable dispositions that are to be found in this House may not gain access to him; a Being before whom thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers (waving his hand all this time over the Treasury Bench, which he sat behind), all veil their faces with their wings. But though our arguments may not reach him, probably our prayers may." "The orator," proceeds Clive, "then apostrophised into a solemn prayer to the Great Minister above that rules and governs over all to have mercy upon us, and not to destroy the work of His own hands, and to have mercy on the public credit, of which He had made so free and large a use. 'Draw not to perdition that vast public debt—a mass of seventy millions—of which Thou hast employed in rearing a pedestal for Thy own statue.' Here," adds Clive, "Augustus Hervey called him to order, to the great disgust of many."



side started up to call him to order. There was, as Burke said, a most disorderly rage for order. When at last he was suffered in some measure to proceed, chafed and goaded as he had been, and even at length by Fox among the rest, he no doubt spoke against the right honourable gentleman (for now he dropped the name of friend) much more bitterly and strongly than he had at first designed. 'Certainly,' he said, 'it is indiscreet at any period, but especially at my time of life, to provoke enemies, or to give my friends occasion to desert me. Yet, if my firm and steady adherence to the British Constitution place me in such a dilemma, I am ready to risk all, and with my last words to exclaim, "Fly from the French Constitution!"' Fox here whispered across to him, 'There is no loss of friends.' 'Yes,' rejoined Burke, 'yes, there is a loss of friends. I know the price of my conduct. I have done my duty at the price of my friend. Our friendship is at an end.' In tears Fox besought his friend to reconsider his decision, but Burke was proof against all entreaties. From that night dated a rupture which lasted during the few remaining years of Burke's life.

Of a totally different type from Burke was the volatile and gifted Sheridan. Where Burke distinguished himself by depth, Sheridan won fame by sparkle. The tropes and images in the one case gave place in the other to witty *bon mots* and pointed epigrams. In fine, there was as little similarity between the oratory of the two as there is between old port and dry champagne. Curiously enough, having regard to the great reputation he afterwards obtained, Sheridan's maiden speech was a hopeless failure. After he had delivered it the clever young Irishman went up to the gallery to ascertain the opinion of Woodfall—"Memory Woodfall"—upon the performance. "I am sorry to say," said the great reporter, in reply to an eager question, "that I do not think this is in your line; you had much better have stuck to your former pursuits." For a moment Sheridan rested his head upon his hand in contemplation, and then he vehemently exclaimed, "It is in me, however, and by G—, it shall come out." Sheridan did not overrate his powers. He became incomparably the most witty speaker that had ever been known in Parliament. Moore, in his biography, unkindly lays bare the process by which his dazzling impromptus were elaborated, but the revelations do not materially diminish our sense



BURKE'S DAGGER SPEECH.

A caricature by Gillray, illustrating the famous scene in which Burke threw down a dagger on the floor of the House.

of admiration at the extraordinary qualities of his genius. Byron once said of him, "Whatever Sheridan has done or chosen to do has been *par excellence* always the best of the kind. He has written the best comedy (*The School for Scandal*), the best opera (*The Duenna*), and the best address ('Monologue on Garrick'), and to crown all, delivered the very best oration (the Begum speech) ever conceived or heard in this country." The poet's praise is somewhat exaggerated, but the speech to which he alludes certainly was a remarkable effort. Burke declared it to be the most astonishing effect of eloquence, argument, and wit united of which there was any record or tradition. Fox said: "All that he had ever heard, all that he had ever read, when compared with it, dwindled into nothing and vanished like vapour before the sun"; while Pitt acknowledged "that it surpassed all the eloquence of ancient and modern times, and possessed everything that genius or art could furnish to agitate and control the human mind." So tremendous was the excitement created by the speech on the night it was delivered that it was necessary to adjourn the House. Within twenty-four hours, as Macaulay relates, Sheridan was offered a thousand pounds for the copyright of the speech. Later, Moore, with the short-hand writer's notes before him, stigmatised the utterance as "trashy bombast," but, making every allowance for the circumstances of the hour, which greatly heightened the effect of the orator's utterances, there can be but little doubt that it really was a remarkable performance. Sheridan's qualities, however, learnt rather to display than to solid accomplishment. He had a position of great eminence in the House, but he never carried much weight.

Both Sheridan and Burke were completely overshadowed in point of influence by Pitt and Fox. In point of Parliamentary experience Fox had a considerable advantage over his great rival, he having entered Parliament in 1768, while Pitt did not appear at St. Stephen's until 1781. The lives of the two statesmen were curiously interwoven from their childhood. One day Lady Holland, Fox's mother, having paid a visit to Lady Hester Pitt in 1767, wrote the same day to her husband describing Pitt, then only eight years old, as really the cleverest child she ever saw, and adding in prophetic language, "Mark my words—that little boy will be a thorn in Charles's side as long as he lives." The prescience of the doting mother was justified by

events. Almost to the last day of his life Pitt was indeed a "thorn in Charles's side."

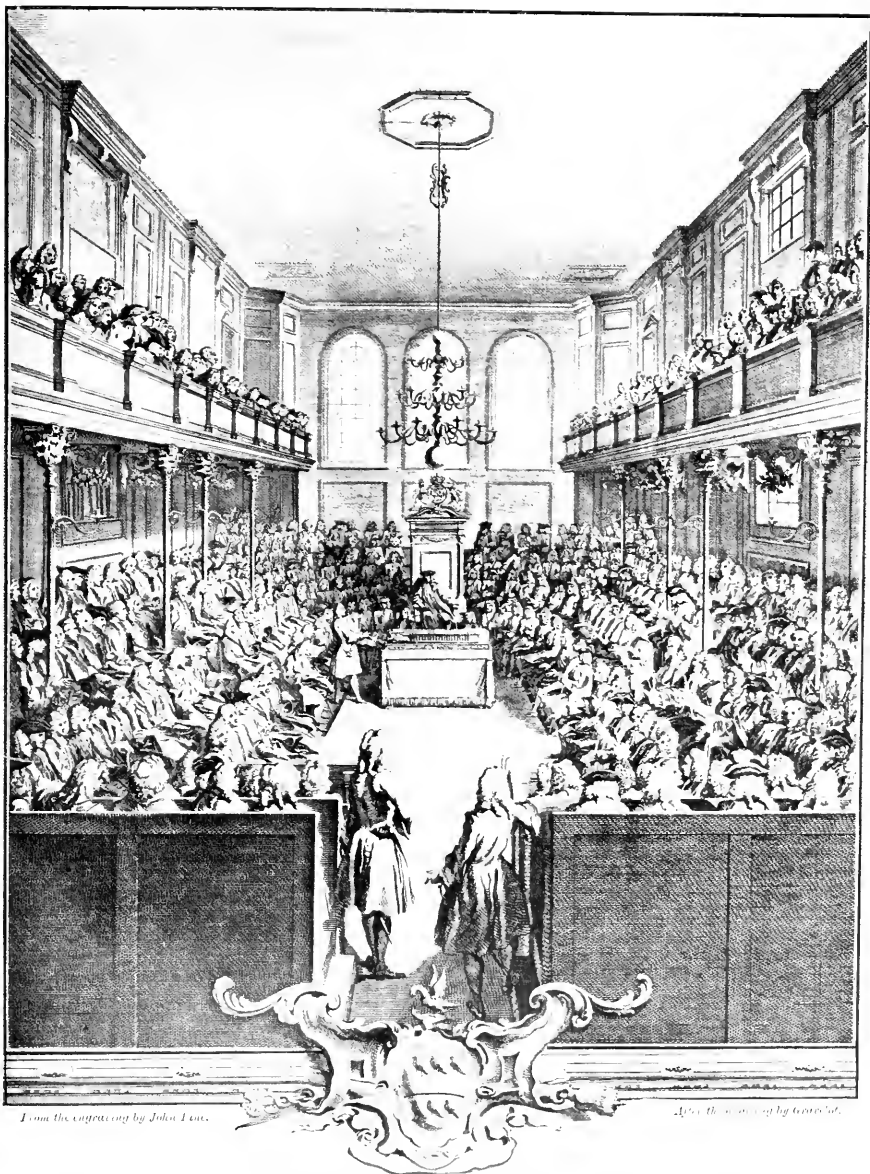
But their earliest political years were passed in a close if not intimate friendship. Fox, as has been stated, had a long start of his future antagonist in Parliament. Returned for Midhurst when he was only nineteen years old, he took his seat on May 10th, 1768. Within a twelvemonth he had made three speeches, two of which, on the Wilkes case, were ambitious efforts which attracted considerable attention. In a letter relating to the second of them, which was made on April 14th, 1769, his father, addressing a friend, wrote in terms of pardonable elation. "I am told," he said, "that few in Parliament ever spoke better than Charles did on Tuesday—off-hand, with rapidity and with spirit, and with such knowledge of what he was talking of as surprised everybody in so young a man. If you think this vanity, I am sure you will forgive it." The partiality of a parent has to be taken into account in weighing this estimate, but that Fox's powers at this very early period were singularly



From the painting by John Russell, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

Dramatist, wit, and orator, whose speeches in the House of Commons are amongst the most remarkable ever delivered there.



INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN 1742.

With Speaker Onslow in the Chair, and Sir Robert Walpole, who wears the Ribbon of the Garter, addressing the House. This is the best view extant of the House in the eighteenth century.



From the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE.

Famed for his oratory : his Parliamentary speeches are classic examples of eloquence.

may be admitted. At the same time, it is notorious that Fox's irregularities, and especially his love of gaming, in his early years went far beyond those of the majority of the young men of even that lax age. We are given in "Fox's Correspondence" a singular picture of the way in which the *jeunesse dorée* who composed Fox's set spent their leisure. The rendezvous was Almack's, where the play was for rouleaus of £50 each, and generally there was £10,000 in specie on the table. The manners of the gamblers were singular. "They began by pulling off their embroidered clothes and put on frieze great-coats, or turned their coats inside outward for luck. They put on pieces of leather (such as are used by footmen when they clean their knives) to save their laced ruffles, and to guard their eyes from the light, and, to prevent tumbling their hair, wore high-crowned straw hats with broad brims and adorned with flowers and ribbons, masks to conceal their emotions when they played at *quinze*. Each gamester had a small neat stand by him to hold his tea, or a wooden bowl with an edge of ornolu to hold his rouleaus." In attendance outside were Jews who advanced money to the young spendthrifts at exorbitant rates of interest. Fox made early and frequent acquaintance with these gentry, his ante-room, where they were usually to be found, being on that account whimsically termed his "Jerusalem Chamber." The extent to which he squandered his substance in these early days of his career may be gathered from the fact, stated on authority, that within a few years Lord Holland had disbursed about £20,000 to liquidate the gambling debts of his two sons.

developed is shown by independent testimony. Horace Walpole dropping into the House one evening in April, 1772, found Fox on his legs, and he describes in a letter to Sir Horace Mann his impressions of the young orator. "Fox's abilities," he remarks, "are amazing at so very early a period, especially under the circumstances of such a dissolute life. He was just arrived from Newmarket and had sat up drinking all night, and had not been in bed! How such talents make one laugh at Tully's rules for an orator, and his indefatigable application. His laboured orations are puerile compared with this boy's manly reason."

The reference to Fox's dissipated habits made by Walpole is thought by some of his biographers to be somewhat exaggerated. That Fox, with his lax up-bringing, was not the most regular of youths is admitted. But it is claimed that he could not have achieved the success he did as a debater if he had been altogether the loose fish which this statement would imply. The force of the line of reasoning



*From the portrait by Sir Jael on  
Reynolds, P.R.A.*

CHARLES JAMES FOX AS A YOUNG  
MAN.

The eminent statesman who was the great rival of the younger Pitt during the greater part of his career.

the floor of the House. Some of these encounters will call for notice; but, meanwhile, we must first glance at the circumstances under which Pitt made his entrance into the Parliamentary arena.

Pitt's training was the very opposite to that of Fox. He was brought up in the most rigid principles of morality and religion, and the utmost care was taken to ensure that his education should be thorough and comprehensive. His quick intelligence and sensitive nature responded to these influences. From his earliest boyhood he showed a seriousness and devotion to duty quite remarkable in a youthful scion of a noble house in that day. St. Stephen's early attracted him—partly, no doubt, by reason of the glamour which the transcendent genius of his father had cast over it for him; partly because of the promptings of ambition. Night after night he was to be found in the Strangers' Gallery watching with absorbed attention the oratorical conflict below. He heard the debates, as Macaulay remarks in his picturesque way, "with a close scientific attention resembling that with which a diligent pupil at Guy's Hospital watches every turn of the hand of a great surgeon through a difficult operation." It was, therefore, as quite an old Parliamentary hand that he took his place on the floor of the House and joined in the fray.

His first speech, delivered on Burke's renewed bill for the reduction of the Civil List, was, says Earl Russell in his "Life of Fox," delivered with a fluency, a precision, a dignity, and a method that are usually the acquirement of many years of practice. Lord North declared it the best *first* speech he had ever heard. The effect was prodigious. Lord Holland

In spite of these distractions, Fox went steadily forward in the great political race at St. Stephen's. His birth and connections unquestionably were an immense advantage for many years; but without solid talents he could never have attained the position of influence he early filled. In debate he showed astonishing readiness. Before many years had elapsed he was almost without a rival. A description of his style, which, though belonging to a later period than that of which we are speaking, may be cited here, as his oratorical methods underwent little change through life. His habit was to take the arguments of his opponents one by one and reply to them; and it is said that without the aid of this text upon which to hang his comments he could make little progress. "The opening of his speeches," says Sharpe, whose impressions we are recalling, "was almost always bad. Until he got warmed with his subject he hesitated and stammered, and he often continued for long together in a tame and commonplace strain. Even in his highest flights he indulged in incessant repetitions, was negligent in his language, and was neither polished nor exact in his style. Notwithstanding these defects, he exercised a prodigious influence over his hearers." Fox's greatest strength was not brought out until he had measured his genius with that of Pitt in many exciting combats across



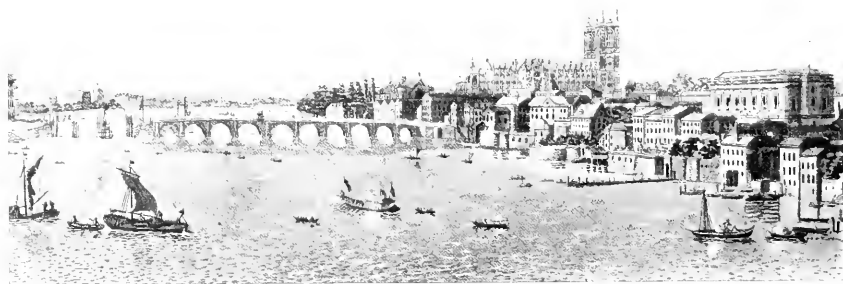
*From the portrait by George Romney, R.A.*

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

In this portrait we have a representation of Fox as he was when he had won his way to fame in the House of Commons.

has related an anecdote which illustrates the presence of mind of the young orator. "As Mr. Fox hurried up to Mr. Pitt to compliment him on his speech, an old member said to be General Grant, passed by and said, 'Ay, Mr. Fox, you are praising young Pitt for his speech. You may well do so, for excepting yourself there's no man in the House can make such another; and, old as I am, I expect and hope to hear you both battling it within these walls as I have done your fathers before.' Mr. Fox, disconcerted at the awkward turn of the compliment, was silent, and looked foolish; but young Pitt, with great delicacy, readiness, and felicity of expression answered, 'I have no doubt, General, you would like to attain to the age of Methusalem.'" Macaulay mentions that the effect of the speech on Burke was such that, moved to tears, he exclaimed, "It is not a chip of the old block; it is the old block itself."

This extraordinarily favourable first impression was more than justified by Pitt's subsequent career. Plunging with ardour into the war of parties, he made a reputation so great by his wonderful powers that, on the reconstruction of the Ministry consequent upon the death of Lord Rockingham in 1782, he at the age of twenty-three became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and



*After the pictures at Watlington.*

#### VIEW OF WESTMINSTER.

Showing the bridge in the course of rebuilding.

eighteen months later—on December 23rd, 1783—assumed the Premiership. Before Pitt attained to supreme power he and Fox had drifted into the position of rivals, to which they were predestined by their political predilections and their great abilities. There was a fierce duel between them over the then recently concluded peace with France. Fox denounced the arrangement as an infamy and a disgrace, and Pitt stood forward as its uncompromising defender. An incident of the contest which is handed down to us by Wilberforce illustrates the extraordinary spirit of the young Minister. It happened that on the night of the debate Pitt was so oppressed with a severe headache that he could scarcely hold up his head. "Fox," says Wilberforce, "assailed him in a very able speech, in the midst of which Pitt was obliged, from actual sickness, to retire to the entry door called Solomon's Porch, behind the Speaker's chair. I seem to see him holding the door in one hand while he yielded to his malady, and turning his ear towards the House, that if possible he might not lose a single sentence that Fox uttered. . . . When Fox sat down he replied to him with great ability, though with less brilliancy than usual; but on a renewal of the same discussion a few days later in a different form, he made one of the finest speeches ever delivered in Parliament." The speech referred to by Wilberforce was considered by Brougham to be the greatest of all Pitt's speeches.



*THE GAMBLERS' ADAMS*

#### GAMING AT ALMACKS

A scene at the famous gambling establishment in St. James's, of which Fox and others were the proprietors, at the time of the French Revolution.

The subsequent encounters between the two great statesmen served to bring out in still more striking fashion the splendid qualities of each: the finished eloquence and lucidity of Pitt, and the amazing debating force and mental alertness of Fox. Their gladiatorial contests extending over a period of nearly a quarter of a century furnish a chapter in Parliamentary history which for profundity of interest has not been since excelled in the personal rivalries of the House of Commons, and probably never will be excelled. The tremendous issues which were before Parliament during the time that the two orators were face to face no doubt assisted largely to create the unique reputations which they have left behind. The American war, the French Revolution, the impeachment of Warren Hastings, the Union with Ireland, and the great war with France, and the financial and political problems arising out of it—these all supplied opportunities for statesmanship such as in the history of the country had never previously been afforded in an equal number of years. How each of the rivals in his way contributed to the common stock of genius which is a precious heritage of St. Stephen's is a story which must be read in detail. Our space will only permit of one further reference to the oratory of this magnificent Parliamentary era. The example is the wonderful speech of May 18th, 1803, in which Pitt defended his war policy. A squabble between the officials of the House and the reporters, which led to the exclusion of the latter from the gallery on that particular night, has unfortunately deprived the world of an authentic report of the oration. But of its superb qualities there can be no question, from the striking impression which it made upon those who heard it. Lord Malmesbury says of the speech: "It was the finest Pitt ever made; never was a speech so cheered, never was there such incessant and loud applause." Another who was present (Mr. Ward, afterwards Lord Dudley) gives a vivacious description of the whole scene: "Erskine and Whitbread were heard with impatience, and when at the



THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR ONSLOW,

The great Speaker of the House of Commons, who occupied the Chair for thirty-five years, presiding over the deliberations of the House in five successive Parliaments.

close of a tedious hour and half Pitt rose (twenty minutes to eight), there was just a violent and almost universal cry of 'Mr. Pitt! Mr. Pitt!' He was then cheered before he had uttered a syllable, a mark of approbation which was repeated at almost all the brilliant passages and remarkable sentiments; and when he sat down (nine) there followed one of the longest, most eager, and most enthusiastic bursts of applause I ever heard in any place on any occasion." As it was the greatest, it was one of the last of Pitt's oratorical triumphs. Within four years "the pilot that weathered the storm" was being carried amid the grief of the nation to the great Temple of Reconciliation across the way. In the same year Fox was laid to rest in the same place, the two graves being only a few inches from each other. It is to this circumstance that Scott alludes in those beautiful lines in *Marmion*:—

Where, taming thought to human pride,  
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.  
Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,  
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;





*A. A. Thompson of the House of Commons, R.A., 1766, No. 100, Pitt's 1766.*

THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT

("The Younger Pitt"), whose splendid statesmanship contributed so largely to bring the country back to normal in the post-Napoleonic period.



By P. Macdonell, R.A.

STATUE OF W. PITT AT THE  
ENTRANCE TO ST. STEPHEN'S HALL.

O'er Pitt's the mournful requiem sound,  
And Fox's shall the notes rebound.  
The solemn echo seems to cry—  
"Here let their discord with them die,  
Speak not for those a separate doom,  
Whom Fate made brothers in the tomb;  
But search the land of living men,  
Where wilt thou find their like agen?"

With the removal of these giants of debate, the House of Commons lost the absorbing attractiveness that had marked its proceedings for several decades previously. There now followed an era in statesmanship only redeemed from absolute mediocrity by the versatile ability and the scintillating wit of George Canning.

Before, however, we take final leave of the eighteenth century, we must make reference to two men who, though they never made any great mark in the House, played a very conspicuous part in the political and literary life of the period. We refer to Edward Gibbon, the historian, and Sir Philip Francis, the reputed writer of the "Letters of Junius." Widely as they differed in many things, the pair shared a common distaste



By E. H. Baily, R.A.

STATUE OF C. J. FOX AT THE  
ENTRANCE TO ST. STEPHEN'S HALL.

to oratory. Gibbon, who sat in eight Parliaments, never opened his mouth on any important occasion. In his "Autobiography" he attributes his silence to prudence. "Timidity," he says, "was fortified by pride, and even the success of my pen discouraged the trial of my voice." "I am still a mute," he wrote on another occasion. "It is more tremendous than I imagined; the great speakers fill me with despair, the bad ones with terror." Sir Philip Francis, more venturesome than Gibbon, often intervened in debate, but he had a hesitating delivery and other defects which prevented his achieving even moderate success as an orator. One of his speeches, however, merits notice as an exception to the rule of ineffective utterances. It was delivered in the course of the debate on Pitt's India Bill. One of the provisions of this measure abolished trial by jury for delinquents returning from India, and set up in its place a new tribunal. "I am not," said Francis, "an old man, yet I remember the time when such an attempt would have aroused the whole country into a flame. Had the experiment been made when the illustrious statesman the late Earl of Chatham enjoyed a seat in this assembly, he would have sprung from the bed of sickness, he would have solicited some friendly hand to lay him on the floor, and thence, with a monarch's voice, he would have called the whole kingdom to arms to oppose it. But he is dead, and has left nothing in the world that resembles him. He is dead! and the sense, the honour, the character, and the understanding of the nation are dead with him." "The repetition of the words 'He is dead,'" says Wraxall, who records the incident, "was attended with the finest effect; and the reflections produced by it involuntarily attracted every eye towards the Treasury Bench, where sat his son. I have rarely witnessed a moment when the passions were touched in a more masterly manner within the walls of the House. The impression made by it on Pitt is said to have been of the deepest kind."

## CHAPTER XL.

### *WESTMINSTER HALL: ITS HISTORY AND TRADITIONS.*

No part of the Houses of Parliament has so much to interest the visitor as Westminster Hall. If the whole of the rest of the vast pile of buildings were swept away, this splendid structure would still confer a unique distinction upon the site. It is not merely that it is a wonderfully perfect and beautiful specimen of the architectural work of an age when hall construction was carried to a high point of excellence; it is not simply that it is a most interesting relic of one of the oldest Royal palaces in Europe. Its claims to attention go far deeper than considerations of this description, touching, in fact, the very foundations of our national life; for within its four walls have been enacted more of the leading events in the history of England than have been witnessed by any other building devoted to purely civil uses in existence. As Audience Chamber, Senate House, Palace of Justice, and Royal Banqueting Hall it has filled a place in the life of the nation of stupendous interest and importance. Even the great Abbey, with its venerable traditions, or the grey Tower of the Conqueror, with its absorbing if sinister record, cannot vie with this ancient chamber in the fascination of its story and the diversity of its points of interest. Unique in its architectural distinction, it occupies a place apart from the great buildings of the country by reason of the poetry and tragedy of its history, and the length and continuity of its national traditions.

The story of the building goes back to the years immediately succeeding the Norman Conquest. Its founder was William Rufus, who intended that it should form a part of a magnificent palace to take the place of the somewhat mean structure which had served the purposes of the English rulers from the time of the Confessor. The work was commenced in the year 1097 and completed some two years later. The King was abroad looking after his troublesome subjects in Normandy during its construction; but he took a close interest in the progress of the operations, and made it his first business on his return in 1099 to inspect the building. According to an old chronicler, he was not over pleased with the architect's handiwork. Replying to a remark of some of his retinue that the building was too large, William observed that "it was not half so large as it should have been, and that it was only a bedchamber in comparison with the building which he intended to make." This was probably merely a piece of Royal boasting, but unquestionably the monarch's architectural designs were conceived on a scale of much splendour. They were not carried out, mainly for the prosaic reason that



WILLIAM RUFUS,  
The founder of Westminster Hall.



*From the public shop Picture*

VIEW OF WESTMINSTER IN 1826.

Showing the Hall, with the Law Courts adjoining designed by Sir John Soane.

the necessary supplies were unobtainable. The King was engaged in completing the work begun in the reign of his predecessor upon the Tower of London, and the heavy demands from this quarter, coupled with the expenses involved in dealing with his rebellious subjects, completely depleted the exchequer. It is doubtful whether the plans ever even entered upon the active stage. A tradition once existed that the foundations of a vast building "stretching from the river of Thames even unto the highway" were discoverable by the diligent searcher, but this was only a tradition. The work of Rufus practically began and ended with the Hall.

How much of the present Hall belongs to the time of its founder is a subject upon which antiquarians have differed considerably. The most reliable authority, no doubt, is the late Mr. J. L. Pearson, R.A., who was employed by the Government to act as its adviser when the changes consequent upon the removal of the Law Courts were made in 1884. This gentleman expressed the opinion, in his "Report on Westminster Hall," that "there remained only in 1834 a couple of corridors and parts of a string-course on the east side to tell of its existence." Later operations connected with the removal of the Law Courts resulted in the uncovering permanently on the west side of a large portion of the earliest Norman walls, "fortunately in a fairly perfect state of preservation." But despite this, what the visitor of to-day sees of the Hall belongs to a much later period than the early one in which its foundations were laid.

According to Mr. Pearson, there were fifteen distinct periods in which the building was altered, excluding the occasion on which he himself was engaged. Henry II., Richard I., Henry III., and Edward III. all had a hand in the renovation or restoration of the Hall. But the sovereign to whom it owed most of its characteristic features is Richard II. Previous to his time there is reason to suppose that the building consisted of nave and aisles, the roof being supported by timber posts. The King removed these obstructions, heightened the walls two feet, added the existing roof, a new northern porch and towers, and "divers lodgings," on the west side, where the Law Courts until a few years since stood. By these changes the building was completely transformed. Imposing as it had been before, it acquired a new grandeur from the stateliness given to its proportions and the beauty of its roof. As it was left by Richard II., we see it in all its essential features to-day. And what a noble vista it is! As an able historical writer<sup>1</sup> remarks: "High above him, bay beyond bay, arch beyond arch, stretches the unrivalled roof of

Cobwebless beams conceived of Irish wood,

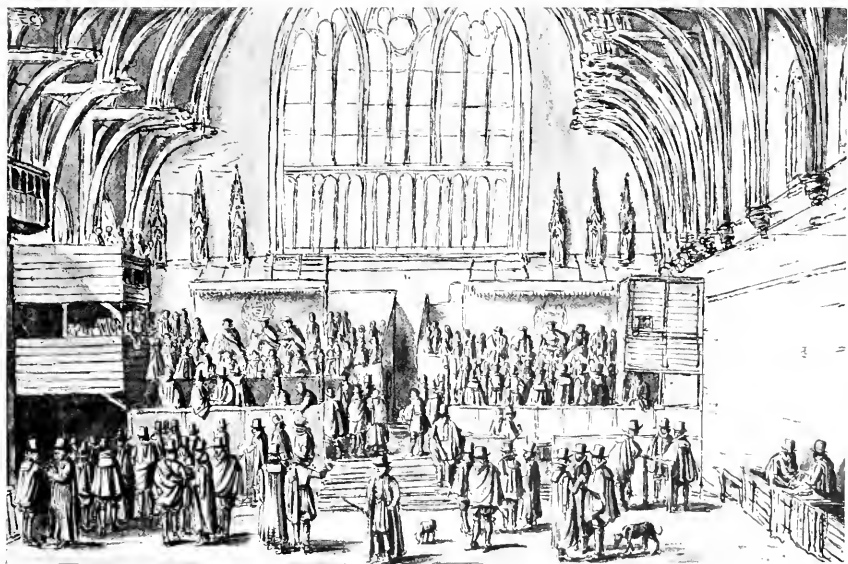
once framed with the stout chestnut timber of Normandy's growth and the black oak of Ireland

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Mackenzie E. C. Walcott, "Memorials of Westminster," p. 247.

by that cunning master of his craft, Henry Yevell, or Zenclly, between 1397 and 1399. Still along the verge upon the upper wall, raised by King Richard two feet more in height, and upon the shields borne by the angels, which supports the roof, the eye notes the badge of the founder—the chained hart."

The beautiful roof has stood the test of time well. It was thoroughly repaired in the last year of the reign of George III., when some forty loads of oak, the remains of old men-of-war broken up at Portsmouth Dockyard, were introduced in substitution of unsound parts. Since then repairs have been made from time to time, and in the nature of things a renovation will be necessary again before many years are out; but there is every reason to hope that the solid work of Yevell will remain for the admiration of many future generations of Englishmen.

The changes made since Richard II.'s time in the internal arrangements of the Hall, though they have not affected the structure to any material extent, are yet of considerable importance and interest. Originally the Courts of King's Bench and Chancery held their sittings at the south end of the Hall, as shown in Hollar's quaint drawing. They were separated from each other by a flight of steps and a passage communicating with a doorway leading to the House of Commons. When Sir John Soane in 1824 built the range of Courts, demolished in 1884, the great Hall was freed from the obstructions which had grown up at the south end of the Hall in consequence of the sittings of the Court. Subsequently Sir Charles Barry's plan of making the building the main approach to the House of Commons necessitated a still more striking innovation. This was the setting back of the great south window and the creation of the beautiful St. Stephen's Porch at the top of the flight of steps at the extreme end of the Hall. The eminent architect would at the same time have raised the roof, "being thoroughly satisfied of the practicability of the process and of the great improvement of proportion which must result." But considerations of expense operated to prohibit this portion of his scheme. All things considered, it is well, perhaps, that his hand was stayed. The work might not have been



*From a drawing by Hollar, in the British Museum.*

#### INTERIOR OF WESTMINSTER HALL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

This is believed to be the earliest view in existence of the Hall. The curious arrangement of the Courts will be noted.



WESTMINSTER IN THE EARLY PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

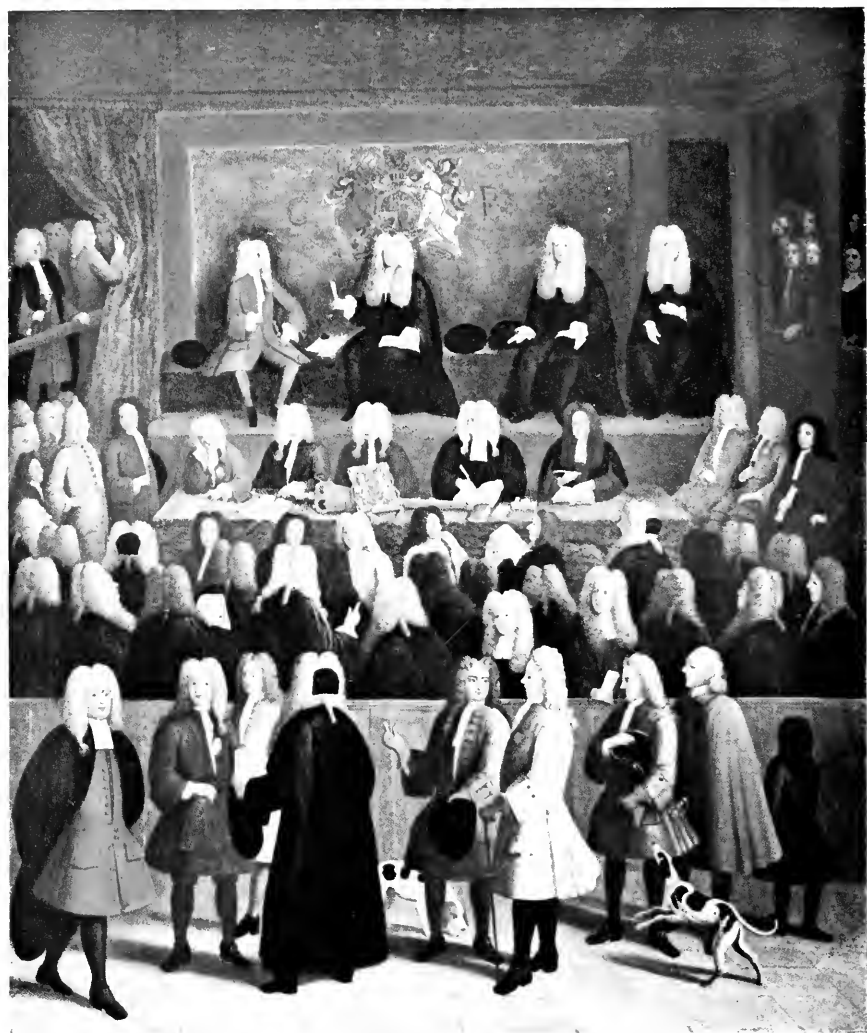
A very early view of Westminster Hall and the adjacent Parliamentary buildings. The perspective is somewhat faulty.

successful, and failure would have been almost a crime. As things are, we have the Hall in all its ancient grandeur, incongruous, possibly, without, when seen in its modern setting, but within, from its graceful lantern, utilised in old times to allow of the emission of smoke from the open fire upon the floor, to the heraldic devices upon the walls, a perfect specimen of the great chamber which for centuries served the purposes of a Royal Banqueting Hall and a Royal Presence Chamber.

It has sometimes been claimed for the Hall that it is the largest apartment unsupported by pillars in the world. But this is an error. Its dimensions—290 feet long by 68 feet broad and 92 feet high—are exceeded by those of the Hall of Justice at Padua and of some railway stations. Nevertheless, whether regarded from the architectural or the historical standpoint, it has a unique distinction amongst the great halls of the world.

Built originally to minister to the passion for regal pomp which was a characteristic weakness of William Rufus in common with the other Norman Kings, the Hall was in its early days the scene of much barbaric pageantry and feasting. Under its splendid roof-tree, as we shall describe in detail in a subsequent chapter, have gathered countless hosts of Royal guests at coronation feasts from the time of the first Henry until the accession of George IV. There also, in Norman times, it was the custom of the King, sitting on his throne, to keep his Pentecost and Christmas and other great festivals, extending to enormous numbers of his subjects the rude and profuse hospitality characteristic of the period. Royal marriage and betrothal celebrations, too, were held in the Hall, to the accompaniment of much rejoicing and merriment, and with a lavish flow of wine, not only in the chamber itself, but also in the fountain in New Palace Yard. Nor was the use of the Hall, even at that period, confined to festive gatherings. As the great public Audience Chamber of the King it was frequently the witness of incidents of dramatic interest and high historic importance. It was in the Hall that the faithless Henry III. received his outraged subjects on March 7th, 1250, and by a show of hypocritical contrition endeavoured to allay their just resentment. Old Matthew Paris has supplied us with a vivid account of this scene in all its bare-faced audacity. He tells us how, by command of the King, the citizens of London assembled together before him at Westminster, "even to the boys of twelve years old," and how "there was such a crowd of people the





THE GREAT HALL, CHURCH OF ST. JOHN OF THE BAPTIST



whole court was filled with them." Then the historian describes the farce which had been prepared with much care by the wily monarch: "Being met together, the King humbly, as if about to shed tears, entreated each one of the citizens with heart and voice to disavow all kind of anger, malevolence, and rancour towards him; for he publicly confessed that he himself, but more frequently his servants, had in many ways injured them, taking away their goods and retaining them, and in various respects encroaching on their rights and liberties, wherefore he besought them to pardon him." The quaint record concludes by stating that "the citizens, understanding that nothing further was required of them, consented to all that the King required, although no restitution was made of what had been taken from them."

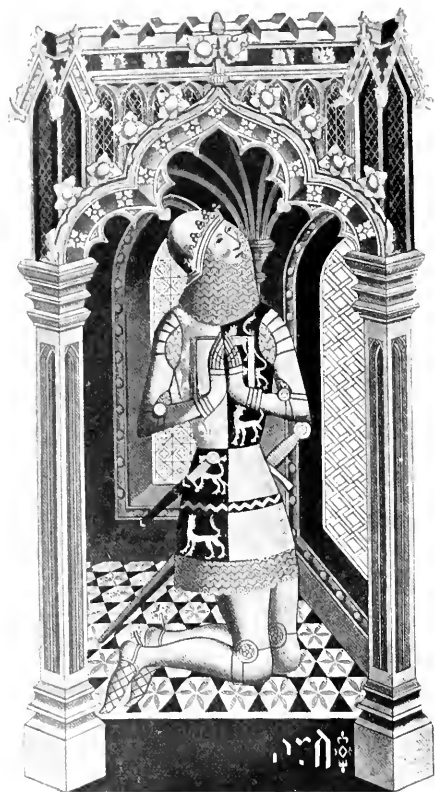
A fitting pendant to this ancient and Royal version of the confidence trick was supplied three years later in the same place by the same King, when he attended a great assembly of the Lords spiritual and temporal convened to register his vow that if he failed to execute his engagements, he would submit himself to excommunication. Gathering in the Hall, the prelates and barons, each bearing a lighted taper in his hand, encircled the King while the curse of heaven was invoked by the Archbishop of Canterbury on those who in future should in any respect violate the two charters (the Magna Charta and the Charta de Foresta). Hands were lifted in air and brows bared, and "the tapers were then extinguished and thrown, stinking and smoking, on the ground, and the dire malediction uttered that the souls of every one who infringed the charters 'might thus be extinguished and stink and smoke in hell.'" Weirdly impressive in its rude fervour, the episode was made additionally striking by the action of the King, who closed the



Photo by W. S. Campbell. Copyright, Hutchinson & Co.

GENERAL VIEW OF WESTMINSTER HALL.

The Hall is one of the Largest in the world unsupported by pillars.



EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

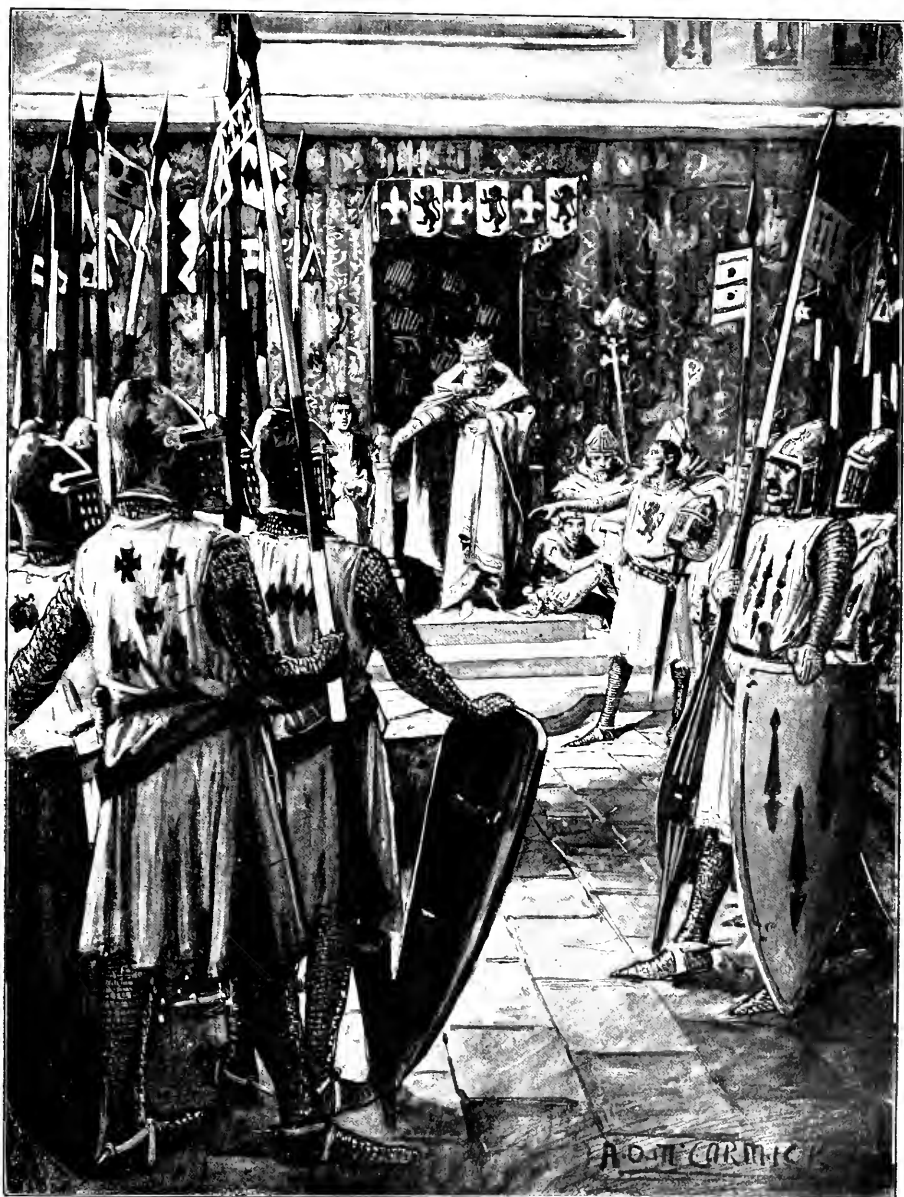
A reproduction of one of the paintings from St. Stephen's Chapel. It shows the Prince at the age of twenty-six.

the stately courtesies paid in 1256 and 1260 to Alexander III. of Scotland and his Queen, and the interesting ceremonial which accompanied the rendering of homage by the same King in 1274 and 1278 to Robert the Bruce, deputed to receive it in the presence of Edward I. as his liegeman, for lands which he held in England. The festival honours paid in the Hall at Christmastide, 1277, to Llewellyn, the unfortunate Prince of Wales, by his future conqueror and oppressor, too, must be noted, as well as the orgies in which "the she-wolf of France" and the worthless Piers Gaveston figured—orgies which scandalised the morality of even that easy-going age. Nor must we forget that it was in this ancient Hall that the chivalrous Edward the Black Prince was created Duke of Cornwall, and that it was in a chamber off the south side of the building he ten years later breathed his last amid the laments of the people, "as though the spring was taken from England's year." Reminiscent of the inspiring side of English history is the episode of a visit to the Hall on May 24th, 1357, after the battle of Poitiers, of the captive John, King of France. Clad in Royal robes and riding upon a snow-white palfrey, the unfortunate King was "about three of the bell in

ceremony by declaiming these words: "So may God help me, I will inviolably observe all these things, as I am a man and a Christian, a knight and a crowned and anointed King."<sup>1</sup> Solemn as the vow taken was, it was speedily broken, and, as a consequence, on May 2nd, 1258, we find a very different gathering meeting on the identical spot. It was an assembly of the barons intent on extracting from the King something more effective than a lightly given promise. Clad in complete armour, the barons presented a formidable and awe-inspiring appearance. "Am I, then, a prisoner?" faltered the trembling Henry when his eyes lighted on the glittering array. "Not so," responded Roger Bigod (the Earl of Norfolk and Earl Marshal); "but as you, sir, by your partiality to foreigners and your own prodigality, have involved the realm in misery, we demand that the authority of the State be delegated to commissioners, who shall have power to correct abuses and enact salutary laws." The King was reluctant to submit to so serious a curtailment of his prerogatives; but the barons were insistent, and eventually he submitted. Rather more than a month later, at a Parliament assembled at Oxford, a council of twenty-four barons and prelates and twelve representatives of the people was appointed to take over the government of the country. Out of these memorable incidents in Westminster Hall, therefore, directly arose the modern system of popular representation.

Of a different type from the scenes in which Henry III. played so degrading a part, but not less characteristic of the age, were

<sup>1</sup> See illustration on page 11.



*From a drawing by A. D. MCM. C.*

#### HENRY III. AND THE BARONS.

The famous scene in Westminster Hall in which the barons forced the monarch into a promise of constitutional privileges.

the afternoon" received by the chivalrous Edward amid the strains of martial music and the singing of hymns of praise by full-robed clergy. The Lord Almoner, the Lord Mayor, and a thousand citizens, including representatives of the great City guilds, followed in the train, and on going to and returning from the Hall flowers were strewn in the Royal visitor's way. It was a noble tribute from one great soldier to a less fortunate one, and was in keeping with the whole treatment of John during his detention. But the chains galled, nevertheless. Rallied on one occasion by the gallant Edward on his melancholy, and asked to join in some merry-making arranged in his honour, he replied in a voice shaken with emotion, "*Quomodo cantabimus canticum in terrâ alienâ?*" ("How shall we sing in a strange land?") For some time longer the French monarch had to support as best he might his gilded exile. We find him sitting at the high table in the Hall on Christmas Day, 1358, with David, King of Scotland, who had come to Westminster to offer his service in the French wars, as well as to arrange a treaty of commerce. It was not, in fact, until after Edward had again invaded and ravaged France that John, in an interview with Edward "in the chapel of the Palace at Westminster," ratified the Treaty of Renunciation

—so called because of the tenor of some of its clauses—and paved the way to his liberation at Calais on October 16th, 1360.

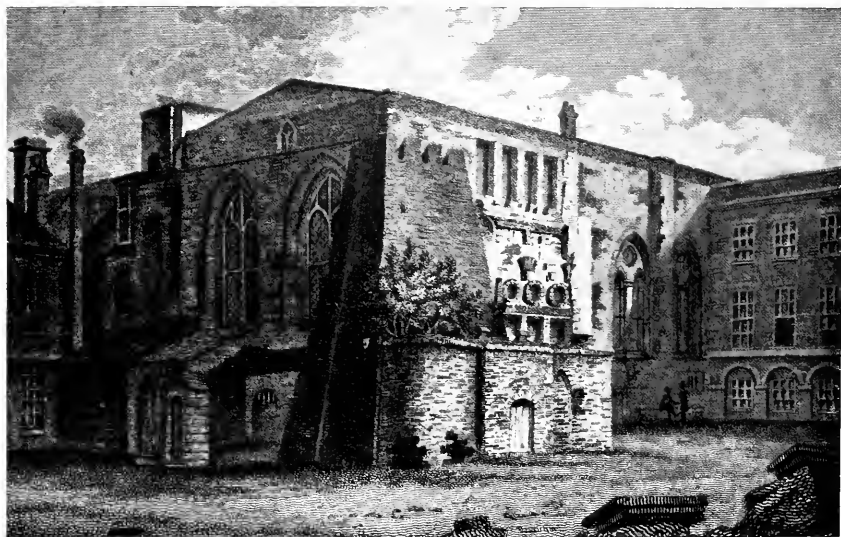
Arising out of this formal termination of the bloody feud which had existed so long between England and France was a meeting of Parliament in the Hall with some picturesque accompaniments which throw an interesting light on the tendencies of the age. When the debates on the treaty had been carried through and a cordial approval extended to the terms of the compact, a mass in honour of the Holy Trinity was celebrated in the Abbey Church by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Thereafter the King and his sons, standing erect in the presence of the French hostages, "torches being lighted and crosses held over the eucharist and missal," witnessed the ceremony of all the English peers present swearing "upon the sacred body of our Lord" to keep the peace which had been agreed upon by the two Kings.

The meeting of Parliament in the Hall noted in this connection was only one of many assemblies called there in those remote days. Marked out alike by its stately proportions and its close association with the Palace for a Royal Council Chamber, the Hall was fixed upon from the earliest period of its existence for the holding of the periodical Councils of State which the caprice or the needs of the Norman Kings caused to be summoned. For a time the gatherings were brought together at irregular intervals, and were without any definite form. But gradually a more complete and regular system grew up, until about the year 1265, mainly as a result of the coercion



EDWARD III.

A reproduction of another of the paintings from St. Stephen's Chapel. It shows the King at the age of forty-four.



THE PAINTED CHAMBER,

The most ancient building in the old Palace. It was here that Chatham's remains rested the night before their interment in Westminster Abbey.

exercised, as already described, upon the faithless Henry III., a Parliament, as we understand the term, was held. To this knights were summoned as representatives of counties, and citizens and burgesses for cities and boroughs. The City of London sent four citizens to represent it, and ever since it has enjoyed this representation—a circumstance which testifies eloquently to the historic continuity of our institutions. From this time forward Parliaments were systematically held, though at irregular intervals. On the separation of the two Houses, which probably was carried out about the reign of Edward III., the building fell into disuse for Parliamentary purposes, though from time to time functions of special importance affecting the Government continued to be held there. These legislative traditions have been completely overshadowed by subsequent memories of more dramatic interest; but they must never be overlooked, for in the Hall we see the veritable cradle of the British Constitution.

The last great public ceremony in Westminster Hall—the lying-in-state of the Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone—demands some notice, as it was unique in the history of the building. The remains of the great Chatham the night before the interment in the Temple of Reconciliation had by had rested in the Painted Chamber in the Palace adjoining, where, if tradition may be relied on, the wasted frame of Edward the Confessor had been prepared for the tomb seven hundred years previously. We have also noted that Edward the Black Prince died in a chamber situated on the south side of the building. But Westminster Hall itself, with all its historical associations, its pageants and pomps, its State trials and Court festivities, had never previously been used for such a purpose as that to which it was put on this recent occasion. Yet nothing could have been more appropriate, for through this historic Hall the great statesman had frequently passed on his way to the House of Commons; and within a few yards of it he had commenced that dazzling career which took him to the highest pinnacle of fame.

The arrangements for the ceremony were highly impressive. Brought in the early morn from Hawarden Castle to Westminster, the remains of the aged statesman were received

by his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal, attended by the officers at arms and the Chaplain of the House of Commons (Archdeacon Wilberforce) in his clerical robes. The coffin was placed in the centre of the Hall, upon a raised bier, at the foot of which was a white silk pall embroidered with gold bearing the inscription, "*Requiescat in Pace*"—the pall a gift to Mr. Gladstone by the Armenians, whose cause he had so stoutly championed. With touching simplicity the arrangements were carried out. No flowers or decorations were placed in the Hall; no ostentatious emblems of woe figured in the picture. At the corners of the bier four massive silver candlesticks with candles were placed, and behind the head of the coffin stood an elaborate embossed brass cross, brought from St. John's Church, Westminster. From sunset to dawn relays of clergy maintained a solemn vigil.

Elaborate arrangements for the admission of the public were devised by the authorities, and admirably carried out. To regulate the movement of the great throng of mourners barriers draped in black were erected from one end of the Hall to the other, allowing of a passage on each side of the coffin, the two ranks meeting at the upper part of the building near the St. Stephen's Porch, where the exits were provided. Throughout the two days that the lying-in-state continued there was a continuous stream of humanity passing in gloomy and reverent silence by the bier. Class distinctions were obliterated in the general desire to pay this last tribute to the illustrious dead. In the throng were peers and legislators, judges

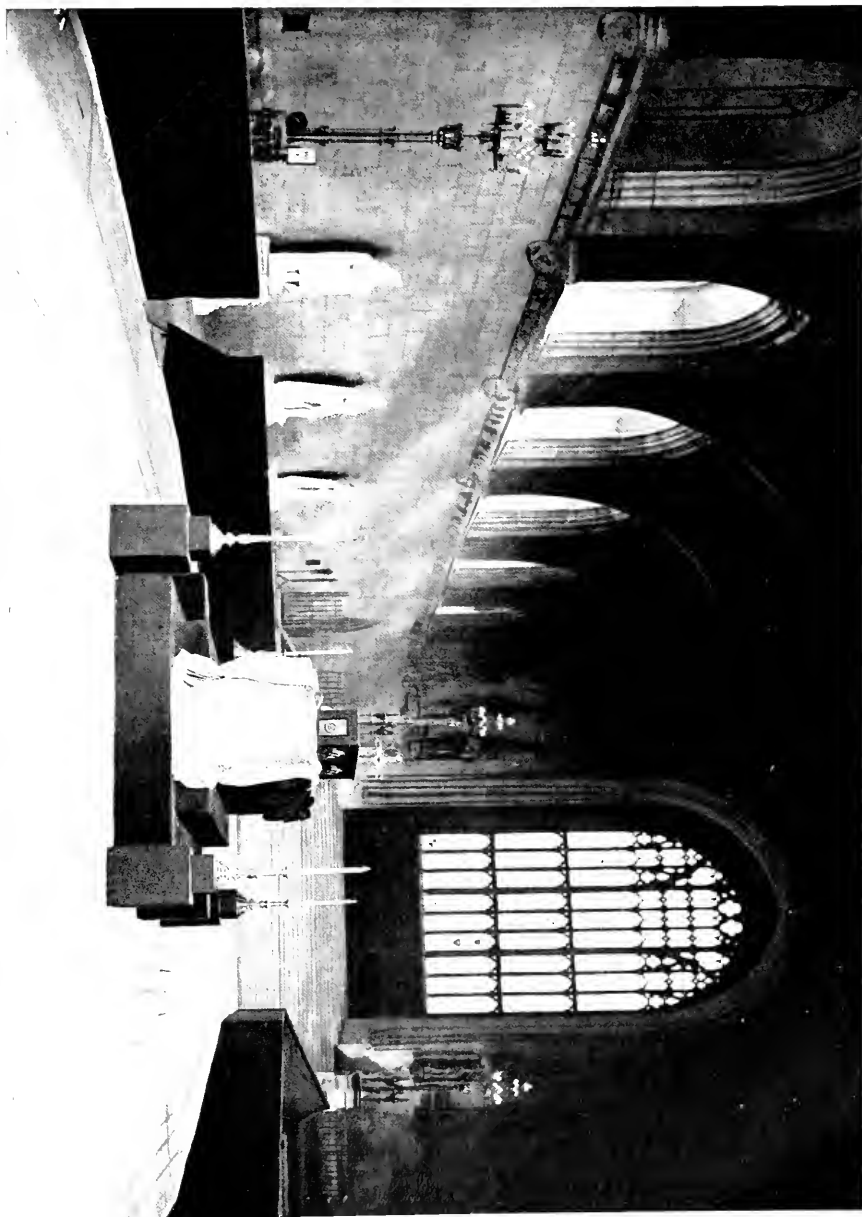
and great Church dignitaries, sharing their common sorrow with the artisan in his working clothes, the policeman off duty, and the soldier in uniform. Passing up the steps at the end of the chamber many lingered for a few moments to take a final look at the catafalque. From this vantage point the scene presented was one of extreme solemnity and impressiveness. The eye ranged over a great mass of people coming in from New Palace Yard and moving slowly along, all turning their heads reverently towards the coffin when passing, and many exhibiting signs of emotion, the while an awed silence prevailed, broken only by the rustling movement of many feet. The effect was heightened by the extreme simplicity of the central object, standing in its splendid isolation in the centre of the chamber, and invoking, as it seemed, the memories of six centuries of national greatness which are enshrined within this stately edifice.

Now comes the last scene of the ceremony—the removal of the body to the grave prepared in the Abbey. Shortly before this sad duty is discharged, Sir Benjamin Stone, the member for East Birmingham, with the special sanction of the



THE COMMONS' ENTRANCE TO WESTMINSTER HALL.

The sole entrance to the old House of Commons was through the Hall.



*From a photograph by Mrs. Benjamin Stone, N. Y.*

THE EYING-AS-STAYE OF THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE  
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

*J. Benjamin Stone  
1859*

authorities, takes a photograph of the coffin as it has been viewed by tens of thousands of mourners in the previous two days. Nature contributes her share to the success of the effort. As the camera is being adjusted a ray of bright sunlight pierces the gloom of the interior and falls softly on the oaken casket, suffusing it with a subdued radiance. Thus aided in his task, the talented operator secures a priceless relic of a memorable episode in the life of Westminster Hall to add to the unique series of historic photographs with which he has enriched the national collections. Meanwhile, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, members of the House of Peers, assemble in the House of Lords, and members of the House of Commons in their House. Representatives of her Majesty Queen Victoria, the Princes of the Royal Blood, representatives of foreign sovereigns, friends and the family of the deceased, and a deputation from the Hawarden estate are assembled in the Hall. After a short prayer from the Bishop of London, the officers of arms marshal the procession. The various heralds are in attendance, wearing plain black clothes in the place of their State uniforms, and carrying white staves. Portcullis and Rouge Dragon Pursuivants-at-Arms lead the way for the Speaker and members of the House of Commons. The Speaker, wearing his full-bottomed wig and State robes, is preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, wearing his silver chain of office and carrying the mace. The officers of the House of Commons accompany the Speaker. Proceeding slowly down the steps at the end of the Hall, the Commons procession passes the coffin, and leads the way to the Abbey. The members of the House of Lords follow next, led by the Lord High Chancellor in his robes, the heralds accompanying them being the Windsor and the Richmond. Representatives of foreign nations, escorted by the Lancaster Herald, follow the Peers, and then the coffin is placed upon the shoulders of the bearers, the Earl Marshal (the Duke of Norfolk)



*Even the great king, John II. sits in the National Portrait Gallery.*

SAMUEL PEPYS.

The diarist, who was a frequent visitor to Westminster Hall to purchase books.

walking in front, and five pall-bearers on each side, among them being H.R.H. the Prince of Wales now his Majesty the King, H.R.H. the Duke of York (now Prince of Wales), the Marquis of Salisbury, the Earl of Rosebery, the Duke of Rutland, and the Earl of Kimberley—all Knights of the Garter. The Right Hon. Arthur J. Balfour and Sir William Vernon Harcourt, representing the House of Commons, walk beside their dead colleague, and with them are Lord Rendel and Mr. George Armitstead (ex-M.P.), both intimate friends of the deceased. Slowly the coffin



STAIRCASE IN WESTMINSTER HALL.

Giving access to the Grand Committee Room in which the South Africa Committee sat.





From a drawing by Gravelot.

#### THE FIRST DAY OF TERM, WESTMINSTER HALL.

This view shows the Hall in the early part of the eighteenth century, with the bookcases and stalls, then a characteristic feature.

is borne to the simple hearse, merely a platform on wheels, drawn by two bay horses, and the last great State ceremony in Westminster Hall is at an end.

In connection with the modern history of the Hall must be mentioned a scheme lately under consideration for reviving the ancient Parliamentary use of the building. The proposal arose out of the disorderly scenes witnessed in the House of Lords on the opening of the first Parliament of the present reign by his Majesty the King. In the crush on this occasion several members of the House of Commons were seriously hurt, and the episode altogether was one which reflected small credit on the august assembly. To obviate similar trouble in future it was suggested that the opening of Parliament, instead of taking place in the Peers' chamber, should be arranged, as in old days, in Westminster Hall. It was a distinctly fascinating proposal, and one for which there was, *prima facie*, much to be said; so the Government appointed a Committee of both Houses, composed of some of the most eminent members of each, to inquire into the feasibility of the scheme. The Committee met, and held several sittings; but its report, when forthcoming, was opposed to any change in the existing arrangements.

Before taking final leave of the Hall, it is impossible not to make some reference to its use through long centuries as a great gathering place of the public. At one time there were bookstalls all round the interior of the building, and works were issued from it as from any other publishing centre. This aspect of it is illustrated by the following extract from "Pepys' Diary": "January 20, 1659.—At Westminster Hall, where Mrs. Lane and the rest of the maids had their white scarfs, all having been at the burial of a young bookseller in the Hall,"



PETER THE GREAT,

A notable visitor to Westminster Hall.

the same place men on the one side with baubles and toys, and on the other taken up with the fear of judgment, on which depends their inevitable destiny. In this shop are to be sold ribbons and gloves, towers and commodors, by word of mouth; in another shop, lands and tenements are disposed of by decree. On your left hand you hear a nimble-tongued, painted sempstress with her charming treble invite you to buy some of her knick-knacks; and on your right a deep-mouthed cryer demanding impossibilities—viz., silence to be kept among women and lawyers."

The stalls were gradually ousted from the Hall, but a thoroughly clean sweep was not made of them until the Law Courts were removed to the Strand. Now you would as soon expect to see any one selling goods in St. Paul's Cathedral as you would in Westminster Hall. Very properly the authorities exercise a jealous supervision over the building, and allow in it nothing inconsistent with its grand history and traditions.

In the eighteenth century the Hall was frequently the scene of great political meetings. Such a use of the building at the present day would be impossible, but no one appears to have objected to the procedure in those days—at least, we may infer this from the following matter-of-fact statement which appears in a letter included in the Fox correspondence, relating to a gathering held on February 2nd, 1780: "Meeting for a petition (in the Westminster election business) in Westminster Hall. The Court party dispersed handbills to represent the dearness of coals, and thence to excite the people against the Duke of Richmond as enriched by the coal tax. About three thousand persons met, headed by the Duke of Portland, the Cavendishes, Charles Fox, Richard Fitzpatrick, Wilkes, Sawbridge, Lord Temple, and the Grenvilles, General Burgoyne, Burke, Townshends, etc. Charles Fox was placed in the chair. Sawbridge moved the petition, and was supported by Wilkes; and a petition similar to that of York voted, and a Committee of Lords and others chosen. Charles Fox then made a fine and warm speech, and was particularly severe on Lord North and the Duke of Northumberland. Dr. Jebb proposed Mr. Fox for the future candidate for Westminster, which was received with universal applause. Lord J. Cavendish and Charles Turner likewise spoke." To parallel this gathering we must imagine the leaders of one or other of the great political parties calling

Again and again the diarist pays visits to the Hall in connection with the purchase of books. It was also a mart of a different kind, as may be gathered from the versified description of the Hall as it was in Henry V.'s reign, by Lydgate, monk of Bury:—

Within this Hall neither reche nor yet poore  
Would do for aught although I should dye;  
Which seeing I get me out of the doore,  
Where Fleminges on me began for to cry,  
"Master, what will you open or buy?  
Fyne felt hatts, or spectacles to reede,  
Lay downe yo' sylver, and here you may speede."

That the Hall was a mart for the sale of miscellaneous goods long after this is indicated by an allusion in the epilogue to Wycherley's *The Plain Dealer*, where we read:—

In the Hall of Westminster  
Sleek sempstress vends amidst the Courts her wares.

Again, in Tom Brown's "Amusements," a work published in 1700, we are given a lively description of the bazaar-like character of the building. Entering the Hall, the visitor "was surprised to see in

in the Hall a mass meeting to settle some important partisan move. But the mind almost declines to conceive such an act of sacrilege.

As a legal and judicial centre the Hall was long famous, apart from its association with State trials and political impeachments. Men who are still in middle age can readily recall the gathering of long-robed and bewigged gentry who daily thronged its ample floor and gave to the place a characteristic appearance. This was an aspect it had worn for centuries. Peter the Great, when he came to London, was taken to the Hall as one of the sights, and seeing so many men in peculiar costumes about, he asked who they were. On being told that they were lawyers, he grimly remarked that he had but two in his dominions, and that he believed he would hang one of them up the instant he got home again. The character of the building as a place of public assembly, and its proximity to the Law Courts, suggested it as the most suitable place in which to put into execution primitive decrees carrying with them personal humiliation. One case recorded in the national archives is that of Sir Thomas Lake, Mary, his wife, and Sarah Swarton, who, on being convicted in 1618-19 of slandering the Countess of Exeter, were ordered "to be whipped at the cart's tail from the prison to Westminster, there to be marked with the letters F. and A. for a false accuser, and to be whipped to Cheapside, and then remain in prison in Bridewell during his Majesty's pleasure." The disciplinary measures of which the Hall was the scene were not confined to the general public. There is a case recorded in the Hatfield Papers, under date 1588, which indicates that disreputable counsel were brought under the lash of public censure in the building. The proceedings referred to touch the case of one Gilbert Sherrington, of Gray's Inn, who was convicted of procuring Jean Seclcroft and Richard Brereton to retract depositions they had made. The offending knight of the long robe was first fined £200, and then, on refusing submission, was fined a further sum of 1,000 marks, "adjudged to be expelled out of Gray's Inn, and sequestered from his practice for ever." Then, as a final stroke of judicial severity, it was ordered "that he should go about Westminster Hall one day in the term time (the judges sitting in the Courts there) with a paper on his head declaring his offences for example and warning to others." The Bar has its black sheep in these days, but wisely it does not make a public parade of them.

In connection with this case of subornation, it may be mentioned that a once familiar figure which haunted Westminster Hall was the hireling witness. Perjured wretches were

went to parade themselves in the Hall, a straw worn in their ears being the recognisable badge of their shame. Sometimes they had to stand in the pillory in the adjacent Palace Yard for their offences. But more often they escaped without punishment, owing to the laxity of the age. It is possible that there is quite as much false swearing to-day as there ever was, but it is something to the good that there is no open bartering of the truth in the ante-chamber of Justice.



OLD PALACE YARD IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

## CHAPTER XII.

### WESTMINSTER HALL: MEMORABLE TRIALS.



*After the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.*

SIR JOHN SOANE, R.A.,

The well-known Parliamentary architect, who designed the old Law Courts attached to Westminster Hall.

INTERESTING as are the legislative associations of Westminster Hall, it is in its aspect as a judicial centre that it has the greatest claims to recognition. From the time of the earliest Norman Kings to the reign of Victoria it was the great pivot around which our judicial system revolved. For several hundred years it was the actual home of important branches of the judiciary. The connection of the Hall with the law grew out of the traditional association of the monarch with the dispensation of justice. The King was not only the sovereign head of his people; he was the fountain of justice. It was, therefore, essential that in the Palace there should be one spot where disputes could be adjusted and the law administered in all cases where the intervention of the Crown was necessary. At the outset some of the rooms of the Palace were used for this purpose; but soon the centre of interest gravitated to Westminster Hall, whose majestic proportions and superb architecture rendered it peculiarly suitable for the impressive ceremonial of the law. In early days the King dispensed justice in person. Seated on his throne at the upper end of the Hall, with all the great officers of State

grouped about him, he listened to the complaints of aggrieved subjects. In theory it was a magnificent system; in practice it worked out badly, for as the King moved about, the Courts had to move with him; and so an element of uncertainty was introduced into the procedure which must have added enormously to the expense of justice while it detracted from its efficiency. Eventually the powers were delegated, and the Courts were permanently settled in Westminster Hall. Up to eighty years ago the Courts of Chancery and King's Bench actually sat in the Hall itself; the other Courts were distributed about the apartments of the Palace situated in immediate proximity to it. This system continued until the year 1820, when an extensive clearance was made on the north side of the Hall of the old buildings; and upon the site was erected, under the architectural supervision of Sir John Soane, a range of buildings which accommodated the whole of the Courts. Here the administration of justice centred until the new Palace of Justice arose in the Strand and provided a habitation more suited to the modern requirements of the law.

Around the venerable walls of the great Hall cluster many traditions connected with the dispensation of justice. The famous incident of Prince Hal's outbreak fills one of the best-known pages of English history. One of the Prince's boon companions had been arraigned for robbery, and, in order to overawe the judge, the Prince decided to be present. But the occupant of the Bench, Sir William Gascoigne, was a man of strong fibre, and, unmindful of

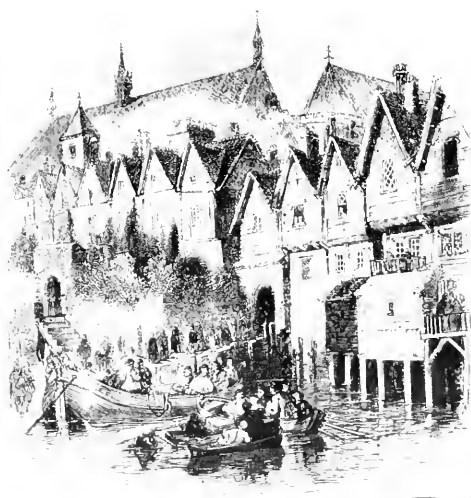
the prisoner's princely patron, he condemned him as his offence deserved. Upon this Prince Henry attempted to rescue the prisoner at the Bar, and for his pains received a stern admonition from the judge. Incensed at this, the Royal brawler sprang up as if to slay him or pluck him from his chair. Gaseoigne still was not intimidated. Asserting "the majesty of the King's place of judgment," he committed the Prince to prison in the King's Bench. Conscious of his error, the impetuous Prince sheathed his sword and quietly submitted to the officers of justice. In the beautiful scene in *The Second Part of Henry IV.* where Prince Henry, as Henry V., meets the Chief Justice, we have a fitting sequel to this moving episode. The Chief Justice, prompted by a remark of the King, justifies his action:—

Question your royal thoughts, make the case yours ;  
Be now the father and propose a son,  
Hear your own dignity so much profaned,  
See your most dreadful laws so loosely slighted,  
Behold yourself so by a son disdain'd ;  
And then imagine me taking your part,  
And in your power soft silencing your son :  
After this cold consideration, sentence me ;  
And, as you are a king, speak in your state  
What I have done that misbecame my place,  
My person, or my liege's sovereignty.

The King, with the ardour of a generous nature, handsomely acknowledges the justice of the judge's action:—

You did commit me :  
For which, I do commit into your hand  
The unstained sword that you have used to bear ;  
With this remembrance, that you use the same  
With the like hold, just, and impartial spirit,  
As you have done 'gainst me.

The incident of Henry's attack on the judge, as Knight points out, has a rather striking parallel in an episode recorded in the Placita Roll of the 34th of Edward I.: "Roger de Hexham complained to the King that whereas he was the justice appointed to determine a dispute between Mary, the wife of William de Brewes, plaintiff, and William de Brewes, defendant, respecting a sum of 800 marks which she claimed from him, and that, having decided in favour of the former, the said William, immediately after judgment was pronounced, contemptuously approached the bar and asked the said Roger in gross and upbraiding language if he would defend that judgment ; and he afterwards insulted him in bitter and taunting terms as he was going through the Exchequer Chamber to the King, saying to him, 'Roger, thou hast now obtained thy will of that thou hast so long long desired.' " William de Brewes, when arraigned for this offence before the King and Council, admitted his guilt, "and because," continues the record, "such contempt and disrespect as well towards the King's Ministers as towards the King himself or



THE OLD LANDING PLACE FOR THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER.  
It shows Buckingham embarking for the Tower after his trial in Westminster Hall.

his Court are very odious to the King, as of late expressly appeared when his Majesty expelled from his household for nearly half a year his dearly beloved son Edward, Prince of Wales, on account of certain improper words which he had addressed to one of his Ministers, and suffered him not to enter his presence until he had rendered satisfaction to the said officer for his offence: it was decreed by the King and Council that the aforesaid William should proceed unattired, bareheaded, and holding a torch in his hand, from the King's Bench in Westminster Hall during full Court to the Exchequer, and here ask pardon from the aforesaid Roger and make an apology for his trespass."

Most of the great State trials recorded in our history have been held within the four walls of this magnificent chamber. Foremost in the long list of historic names handed down to us in this connection is that of Sir William Wallace, gallantest of soldiers and patriots, and most chivalrous of men. Taken prisoner through the treachery of his countrymen, he was conveyed to London, and placed upon trial for his life in the Hall. A contemporary account of the proceedings<sup>1</sup> furnishes an interesting picture of the trial. From this it is to be gathered that Wallace was conducted to the Hall on August 23rd, 1305, by his gaoler, Sir John de Segrave, who was attended by the mayor, the sheriffs, and the aldermen, and a great train of people. The prisoner was placed on a scaffold at the south end of the Hall with a laurel wreath about his brow, in mockery of what was said to have been his boast, that he would wear a crown in that Hall. Peter Malory (the Justiciar of England), Segrave Blunt, the mayor, and two others were the judges appointed for the trial. When the Court met, Malory charged Wallace with being a traitor to King Edward and other crimes, but the patriot answered spiritedly that he had never been a traitor to the King of England, as he did not owe him allegiance. On the same day sentence was given by Malory in the following terms: "William Wallace, a Scot, and of

Scottish descent, having been taken prisoner for sedition, homicides, depredations, fires, and felonies, and after our lord the King had conquered Scotland, forfeited Baliol, and subjugated all Scotsmen to his dominion as their King, and had received the oath of homage and fealty of prelates, earls, barons, and others, and proclaimed his peace and appointed his officers to keep it through all Scotland; you, the said William Wallace, oblivious of your fealty and allegiance, did, along with an immense number of felons, rise in arms and attack the King's officers and slay Sir William Heselrig, Sheriff of Lanark, when he was holding a Court for the pleas of the King; did with your armed adherents attack villages, towns, and castles, and issue briefs, as if a superior, through all Scotland, and held Parliaments and assemblies, and not content with so great wickedness and sedition, did counsel all the prelates, earls, and barons of your party to submit to the dominion of the King of France, and to aid in the destruction of the realm of England; did with your accomplices invade the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland,



*After Holbein.*

SIR THOMAS MORE,

Who was tried and condemned in Westminster Hall for treason.



*After Holbein.*

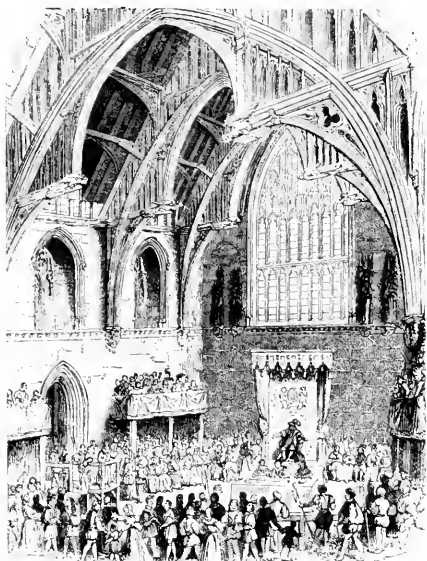
JOHN FISHER, BISHOP OF ROCHESTER,

Whose opposition to the divorce of Henry VIII. from Anne Boleyn cost him his life.

<sup>1</sup> "Chronicles of Edward I. and Edward II," Rolls Series.

and Westmoreland, burning and killing every one who used the English tongue, sparing neither age nor sex, monk nor nun; and when the King had invaded Scotland with his great army, restored peace, and defeated you, carrying your standard against him in mortal war, and offered you money if you surrendered, you did despise his offer and were outlawed in his Court as a thief and felon according to the laws of England and Scotland; and considering that it is contrary to the laws of England that any outlaw should be allowed to answer in his defence, your sentence is that for your sedition and for making war against the King, you shall be carried from Westminster to the Tower, and from the Tower to Aldgate, and so through the City to the Elms at Smithfield, and for your robberies, homicides, and felonies in England and Scotland, you shall be there hanged and drawn, and as an outlaw beheaded, and afterwards, for your burning churches and destroying relics, your heart, liver, lungs, and entrails from which your wicked thoughts came shall be burned, and finally, because your sedition, depredations, fires, and homicides were not only against the King, but against the people of England and Scotland, your head shall be placed on London Bridge, in sight both of land and water travellers, and your quarters hung on gibbets at Newcastle, Berwick, Stirling, and Perth, to the terror of all who pass by."

This was one of the earliest of the great State trials held in Westminster Hall. More than two hundred years later, on May 13th, 1522, another unfortunate figure in history—Edward Stafford, Earl of Buckingham—took his stand at the bar in the Hall to answer charges of treason. Dupe of a wretched astrologer, his guilt was clear, and at the hands of his relative, the Duke of Norfolk, he received the dread sentence of a traitor. Just thirteen years later Sir Thomas More, broken in health by long imprisonment, but undaunted in spirit, was seen on the same spot hearing his doom pronounced by a sycophantic tribunal, the too willing tool of Henry VIII. As he was led out of the Hall, his son, brushing through the ranks of the soldiery, fell sobbing on his father's neck and implored the guards to allow him to share his parent's fate. The pathetic incident made a great impression on those who witnessed it, but nothing could move the merciless King, though history records that when he received the news that the decree had been executed, he abandoned his play at the tables and shut himself up alone in his room to commune with his bitter thoughts. His remorse, if remorse it was, was transient, and soon fresh victims were forthcoming to appease his insatiable lust for blood. On June 17th, 1535, a little over a month after More's condemnation, John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who had committed the crime of opposing the tyrant's divorce, was arraigned in the Hall for treason. Calm in the possession of a clear conscience and a good understanding, he met his inevitable doom with a cheerfulness that amazed those about him. One day soon after the trial, a rumour having gone forth that he was to go to his execution, his servant omitted to prepare his dinner. Addressing the man, he said: "Well, for all that report, thou seest me yet alive; and, therefore, whatsoever news thou shalt hear of me hereafter, let me no more lack my dinner; and if thou see me dead when thou comest, then eat it thyself; but I promise thee, if I



HENRY VIII. IN WESTMINSTER HALL.

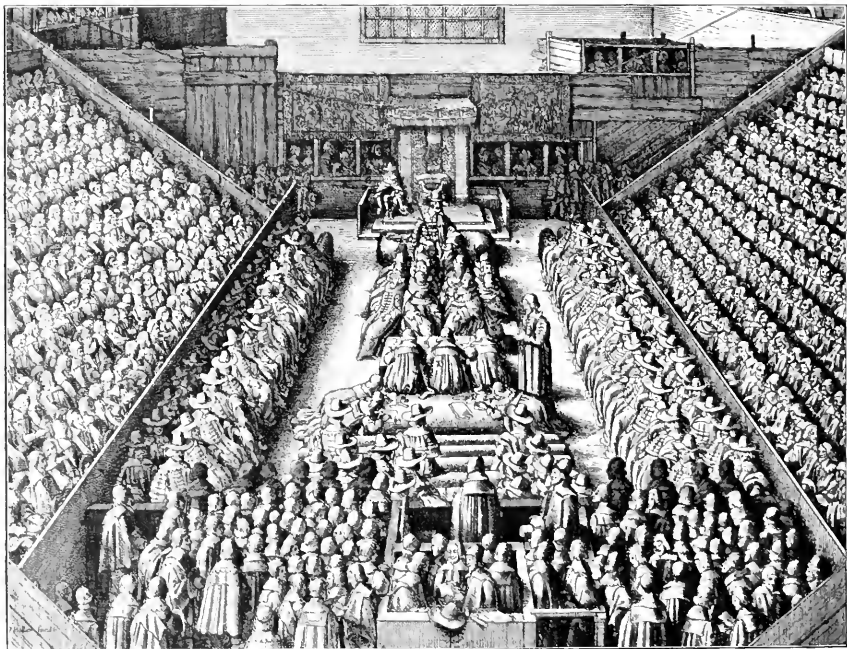
Presiding at the trial of Lambert for heresy.

be alive, I mean by God's grace to eat never a whit the less." More fortunate than this worthy prelate, William Lord Daere, who was tried in the Hall on July 9th, 1535, was acquitted, his being perhaps the only instance of a man of distinction singled out for vengeance escaping Henry's toils.

The Protector Somerset; his rival, Northumberland; Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk; Sir Thomas Wyatt; Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk; Philip Earl of Arundel; Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, are other names which figure in the roll of prisoners condemned within the Hall in this troublous Tudor period. Even more crowded with these fateful tragedies is the record of the building in the following century. First in chronological order we have Guy Fawkes and his co-conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot, who received here, in January, 1606, that frightful sentence of the traitor which was afterwards carried out with a faithfulness to detail as realistic as it was inexpressibly horrible.

Another name indelibly impressed upon the judicial records of the apartment is that of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, who for eighteen days in 1640 stood his memorable trial in the presence of the King and Queen and the two Houses of Parliament and a vast gathering of people. Most elaborate arrangements were made for the safe custody of the prisoner. Daily the prisoner was brought from the Tower escorted by six barges, each rowed by fifty pairs of oars and manned with troops. All about Palace Yard, King Street, and Whitehall troops were stationed. Inside the Hall was the flower of the aristocracy, with Charles and his consort amongst the most eager and absorbed of the spectators. It was said by Sir John Denham, in the well-known couplet, that

Each seemed to act the part he came to see,  
And none was more a looker-on than he.



*From a contemporary print.*

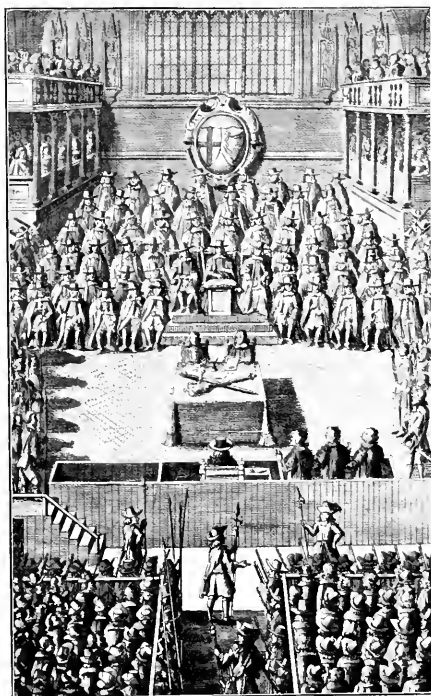
"THE TRUE MANNER OF THE SITTING OF THE LORDS AND COMMONS OF BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT UPON THE TRYAL OF THOMAS EARLE OF STRAFFORD, LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND."



But Strafford's moving defence testifies that the writer's observation must have been at fault. Pointing to his children, who stood beside him, he said: "My lords, I have now delayed your lordships longer than I should else have done. But for the interest of these dear pledges, which a departed saint in heaven has left me, I should be loth——" Here a flood of tears checked his utterance. "What I forfeit for myself, it is nothing; but I confess that my indiscretion should forfeit for them, it wounds me very deeply. You will please pardon my infirmity. Something I should have said; but I see I shall not be able, and therefore I leave it. And now, my lords, I thank God that I have been, by His blessing, sufficiently instructed in the extreme vanity of all temporary enjoyments compared to the importance of our eternal duration. And so, my lords, even so with all humility, and with all tranquillity of mind, I submit clearly and freely to your judgments; and whether that righteous doom be to life or death, I shall repose myself, full of gratitude and confidence, in the arms of the Great Author of my existence. *Te deum laudamus.*"

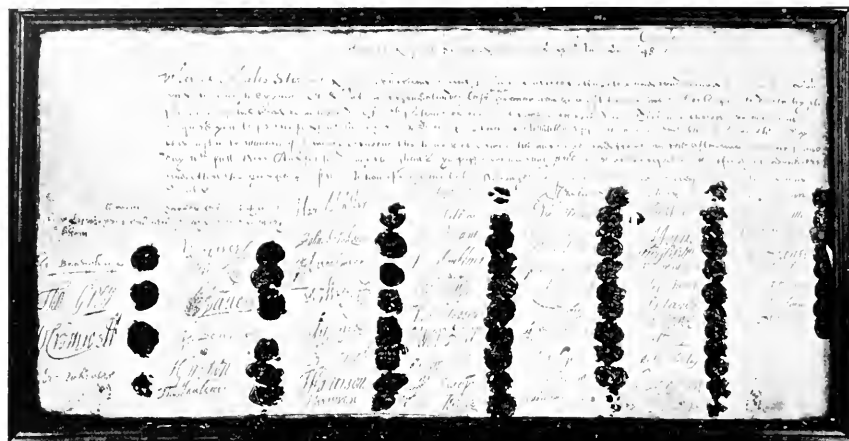
Strafford's trial was followed after the lapse of nine years by that of his Royal master. This arraignment of Charles I. is without doubt the greatest and most moving event in the whole history of Westminster Hall. Now, more than two and a half centuries after it happened, it exercises over

the least impressionable visitor a peculiarly solemn influence as, taking his stand on the identical spot where the monarch stood during the four days the proceedings lasted, he reviews in his mind the tremendous events which flowed from that episode. To describe the trial here would be a work of supererogation. The picture of Bradshaw in his scarlet robes, sitting in all the panoply of judicial state surrounded by myrmidons of the triumphant Parliamentary party, who with him acted as the King's judges, is still a vivid memory. Who cannot recall from the reading of his school-days the pathetic spectacle presented by the King as, divested of honours, but maintaining undiminished his sovereign dignity, he tenaciously challenged the right of the tribunal to sit in judgment over him? Who does not remember the courageous protest of the noble Lady Fairfax, her denunciation of Cromwell, and her sharp remark when her husband's name was called as a member of the Court, "He has more wit than to be here"? Who has forgotten that touching act of devotion on the part of one of the guards, who, as the fallen King was being led out of the Hall on the last day of the trial, January 27th, exclaimed in tones of eager sympathy, "God bless you, sire," a remark which earned for him a stinging blow from his superior officer's cane? Equally familiar is the dramatic scene of a few years later—a direct consequence of the trial—in which Cromwell, clad in a robe of purple velvet lined with ermine, and holding the sceptre in one hand and the Bible in the other, was proclaimed Lord Protector in the Hall amid the acclamations of a subservient



*From a contemporary print.*

THE TRIAL OF CHARLES I. IN WESTMINSTER HALL.



THE DEATH WARRANT OF CHARLES I.

Photographed specially from the original in the House of Lords.

following. These are all matters which go to make up some of the best-known pages of English history. But, indeed, the story of Westminster Hall so teems with great historic memories that it is difficult to separate its history from that of the country as a whole.

While the recollection of Charles I.'s downfall was still vivid, the seven bishops—Sanicroft, Lloyd, Trelawney, White, Turner, Ken, and Lake—were at the end of June, 1688, brought from the Tower by water to the Hall to stand their trial for declining to accept James II.'s Indulgence. Vast crowds of people lined the banks and poured their blessings upon the bishops as they passed by. In the train of the prisoners went a distinguished body of noblemen and gentlemen of influence. On every side, even in the judgment chamber, their eyes ranged over sympathetic faces. After their triumphant acquittal, the popular demonstrations were redoubled in fervour. People fought with their escort for the privilege of touching their hands or kissing the hems of their garments. Bystanders implored their blessing with an earnestness which betokened their belief in the piety as well as the patriotism of the seven. So embarrassing did the attentions of the mob at length become, that the bishops had to be smuggled to their homes by devious routes. Meanwhile the news of their acquittal, spreading like wildfire, was carried to James, who was reviewing a body of troops on Hounslow Heath, and it struck terror into his pusillanimous heart. A few months later he was a fugitive from the kingdom he had misruled.

Although this episode closed the period of acute turmoil in which the country had been left from the time of Charles I.'s differences with his Parliament, Westminster Hall was in the succeeding eighteenth century to witness many striking trials arising out of the political discords of the period. There was, for example, the impeachment of Dr. Sacheverell on February 27th, 1710, for having in two of his pulpit discourses been too free in his criticisms of the actions of the Ministry. At this time of day it is difficult to realise the extent to which men's minds were stirred by this judicial event. All the skill of statesmanship, all the eloquence of the Par and the Bench, were invoked in the course of the trial, and during the several days it lasted Westminster Hall and its precincts were crowded with people of all classes eagerly intent on learning how the impeachment progressed. Eventually the doctor got off with the mild sentence of a three years' suspension—a punishment which only served to enhance his notoriety and to add to his strongly pronounced vanity. As one writer aptly puts it, "Prayed for even in the Royal Chapel as a person under persecution, escorted to

Westminster by enthusiastic friends, riding in the same chariot with the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford through a chorus of huzzas, the idol of lovely women, who had his portrait painted on their fans and kerchiefs, the hero of the multitude, the champion of the Church, fêted by the London citizens, presented with three thousand guineas by one munificent devotee, Dr. Sacheverell found himself suddenly famous, a martyr without the pangs of martyrdom, a hero without heroism." In the long list of prisoners who were brought to trial in the historic edifice there was probably not one whose fate excited greater popular interest or who was less in need of sympathy. After his trial he made a triumphal progress to his living in Shropshire. "Presents of wine, chaplets of flowers, thanks by mayors, speeches of recorders, the firing of cannon, ringing of bells, processions headed by three thousand gentlemen on horseback, bonfires and illuminations, attested the gratitude of the country to their clerical deliverer." When his period of suspension was over, Dr. Sacheverell, by special request, preached before the House of Commons at St. Margaret's Church. Afterwards he had a substantial reward for his "sufferings" in the wealthy incumbency of St. Andrew's, Holborn.

Of a sterner type were the next persons who were arraigned in Westminster Hall, and far different was their fate. The prisoners were Viscount Kenmare, the Earl of Derwentwater, the Earl of Carnwath, and the Lords Widdrington and Nairn, whose devotion to the Jacobite cause won for them the attentions of the Crown. Kenmare and Derwentwater suffered for their generous indiscretion at the block, while Nithsdale escaped from the Tower through the connivance of his wife, who dressed him in her woman's attire and remained in the cell while he made his liberty sure. The "Trial of the Rebel Lords," as this episode was called was



*Reproduced by permission of the Art Union of London from their large plate of the pictures by C. W. Cope.*

#### THE FUNERAL OF CHARLES I.

One of a series of paintings designed for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament.



DR. SACHEVERELL,

Whose trial in Westminster Hall created a great sensation in the early part of the eighteenth century.

followed, after the interval of a twelvemonth, by the arraignment, on his own petition, of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford. Imprisoned on the outbreak of the Civil War on suspicion of being concerned in the transactions arising out of the escape of Bolingbroke, Harley had languished in the Tower for nearly two years almost forgotten. His reminder to his accusers of his existence secured for him the trial at Westminster Hall, with the characteristic accompaniment of the headsman with axe and block. Notwithstanding the presence of these picturesque adjuncts of a treason trial, an air of unreality marked the proceedings from the beginning. The reasons which had dictated Harley's arrest in the first instance had to a large extent lost their force, and, moreover, the Duke of Marlborough and other high-placed personages had abundant reason for preventing a serious pressing of the charges. So it came about that when some time had been expended in the discussion of technical points of procedure, the Peers acquitted Harley and dismissed the impeachment. The Commons, however, to save their credit, voted an address to the throne to except the earl from the act of grace, ex-

pressing their regret at being reduced to the necessity either of having to give up rights and privileges of the highest importance, or seeing this offender escape with impunity for the present. The earl lived for some years after his trial—long enough to clear his reputation from the taint of treason. But there are circumstances in his conduct of public affairs which are not incompatible with the theory that he allowed his party zeal to outrun his regard for his country's honour.

Dealing further with the judicial history of Westminster Hall, we may note in brief detail several trials which followed that of Harley. First, there appear upon the stage the rebel lords of 1745—Cromartie, Kilmarnock, and Balmerino. The trial was conducted with much solemnity, and was marked by some moving incidents, notably the pathetic plea of Cromartie for his life—a plea which was finally successful—and the action of the gallant Balmerino in lifting up a child that desired to see him as he passed to the place of judgment. Quickly succeeding this trial came on March 19th following the arraignment of Lord Lovat, “the brutal chief of a trembling clan,” whose duplicity and chicanery had alienated his friends and incensed his foes. Arrested in Scotland under romantic circumstances familiar to every student of Scottish history, the old chieftain was brought by easy stages to London. At St. Albans he was met by Hogarth, who had some acquaintance with him, and the great artist there sketched that wonderful portrait of him which is amongst the treasures of the National Portrait Gallery. A remarkable success attended this bit of artistic enterprise. Promptly engraved, impressions of the work found such a ready sale that the press was kept running night and day to keep pace with the public demands. Meanwhile, “the Fox of the North,” put upon his trial in Westminster Hall, was conducting himself with characteristic guile. Bereft of the aid of counsel under the rule which denied such assistance to those charged with treason, he ably defended himself, endeavouring to shift the burden of his crime upon the shoulders of his son. The old peer was endowed with a gift of morbid humour, which he exercised during his examination unsparingly. When the first witness, who happened to be one of his servants, was called, he exclaimed, “How dare you, sirrah, appear without your master's orders?” Afterwards, when invited by the Lord High Steward to question Sir E. Falkener, who had given evidence against him, he stated that he had no wish to examine the witness, but he added he was his obedient servant, and wished him all joy with his young wife. Lovat's



*From the painting of R. Kneller, R.A.*

# THE APOPTICAL OF THE SEVEN BISHOPS.

Who were tried in Westminster Hall for refusing to abrogate James II.'s Declaration of Indulgence.

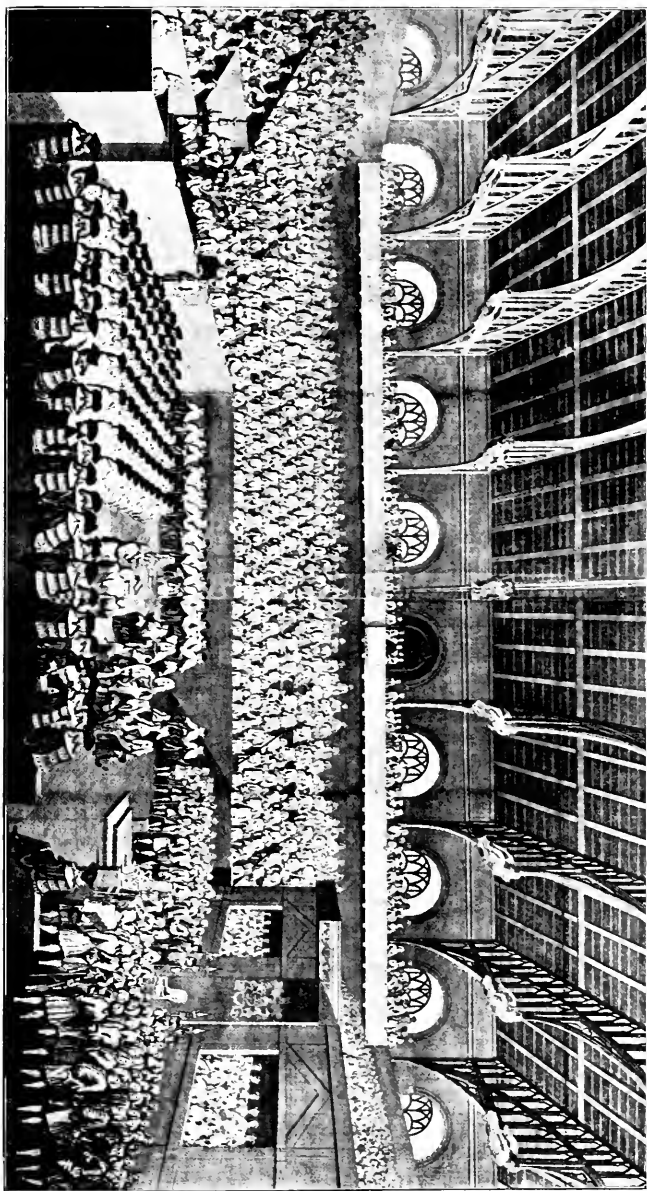


A QUAIN PRINT OF LORD KILMARNOCK AND THE OTHER REBEL LORDS ISSUED AT THE TIME OF THEIR TRIAL IN WESTMINSTER HALL.

guilt was too manifest for any but one result. In due form the dread penalty of the traitor's crime was passed upon him. As he was led away Lord Lowat fired a parting shot at his judges. "Farewell, my lords," he said, with studied politeness, "we shall never meet again in the same place, I am sure of that." When a few days later the old man was led to execution on Tower Hill, he displayed a similar spirit of grim pleasantry. In the course of the morning a portion of the scaffold fell, causing the death of several people. "The more mischief, the more sport," was his sardonic commentary. Again, when he had ascended with difficulty to the platform on which the block was placed, and cast his eyes over the seething mass of people all around, he remarked to a bystander, "Why should there be such a bustle about taking off an old grey head that cannot get up three steps without two men to support it?" He died, in fact, as he had lived—a hardened cynic, looking upon all things human as mere incidents in a great game in which honour and right-dealing were amiable weaknesses, and a low cunning and unscrupulousness were the essentials to success.

A prisoner of a different type from Lord Lowat next stood at the judgment bar in the Hall. This was Laurence Shirley, Earl of Ferrers, who was accused of the murder of his steward, Mr. Johnson, at Stanton, in Leicestershire. Lunacy was pleaded in extenuation of the act; but his trial, which was conducted under circumstances of great impressiveness, failed to justify the defence. He was hanged at Tyburn on May 5th following his trial in the presence of a vast crowd. Five years afterwards, on April 17th, 1765, William Lord Byron was put upon his trial in the Hall for the murder of William Chaworth in a duel arising out of a tavern brawl at the Star and Garter in Pall Mall. In that easy-going age it was not difficult to find "extenuating circumstances" in such a case. Convicted of murder, Lord Byron eventually regained his freedom by claiming his privilege as a peer.

In striking contrast to these proceedings was a later trial held within the Hall. It was the arraignment of the Duchess of Kingston, the erstwhile maid of honour to the Princess of Wales, for bigamy. This lady, young and beautiful, had had a chequered career, which had in it little to recommend her to favourable notice. Yet such was the caprice of the day that her trial for the serious offence of marrying Evelyn Pierrepont during the lifetime of her



THE TITIAL OF SHON FRASER, LORD LADY, IN WESTMINSTER HALL, BEFORE BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

Lord Lard is distinguishable as the figure in black on the left of the picture.



SKETCHES MADE BY HOGARTH AT THE TRIAL OF LORD LOVAT.

proceedings. "I am persuaded," she wrote, "that the duchess is not in the least degree humbled by her position, but mightily pleased with herself for having secured so brilliant a house. People fought and struggled for their places, just as they do at the opera on a great night." The trial, in fact, was little removed from a farce. Its chief result was to furnish gossiping writers with a congenial topic, and add to the records of State trials an instance of judicial frivolity to relieve their general gloom.

Tremendous as was the excitement aroused by the proceedings in the Duchess of Kingston's case, the trial was quite surpassed in public interest by the memorable impeachment of Warren Hastings, which, commencing on February 13th, 1788, lasted for seven years. The inimitable descriptive pen of Macaulay has given us a vivid word-picture of the wonderful scene which was presented on the opening day of the trial: "The grey old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the House of Brunswick. There the ambassadors of great Kings and commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres, and when, before a Senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful

husband, Captain Hervey, Earl of Bristol, was converted into something little short of a triumph for her vanity. Crowds thronged the approaches to the Hall during the progress of the trial, and ladies in all the brilliancy of Court dress graced the peeresses' benches within. By a judicious display by the fair sinner of emotion at the right moment, the judges were induced to avoid the enactment of the penalty for the offence—the branding of the prisoner's right hand upon the block. Mrs. Pitt, who was a spectator of the trial, writing to Horace Mann during its progress, gave an interesting picture of the



SKETCHES MADE BY HOGARTH AT THE TRIAL OF LORD LOVAT.







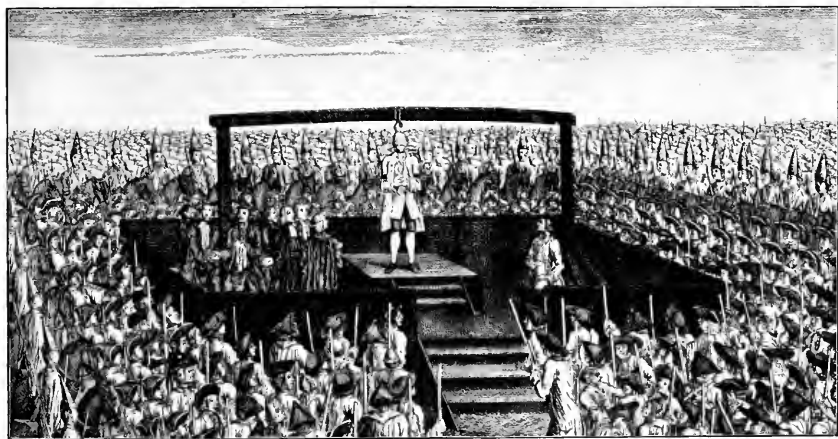
DE GROOT

Portrait of a man in a voluminous coat, holding a book.

Portrait of a man in a voluminous coat, holding a book.

foreheads of so many writers and statesmen and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition—a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious ostentation, but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret pledged his faith. There, too, was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the St. Cecilia, whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticised, and exchanged repartees under the rich peacock hangings of Mrs. Montagu. And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury shone round Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire."

"The trial," another writer (Townsend) says, "was unprecedented in its historic magnitude; in the depth of interest which it excited, in the extent of time and space and detail which it occupied, in the grandeur of the topics which it involved, and in the greatness, not less moral



THE EXECUTION OF LAURENCE SHIRLEY, EARL OF FERRERS, AT TYBURN, MAY 5TH, 1760, FOR THE MURDER OF HIS STEWARD, MR. JOHNSON.

From a drawing made on the spot at the time.

than adventitious, of the managers of the impeachment. In their box were enclosed Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Windham, and Grey, supported, should they require support, by the professional talents of Drs. Lawrence, Mansfield, and Piggott—a band unmatched with mental prowess and rich with the spoils of the ransacked world of eloquence. When their stupendous chief, who rose far above the common stature of human intellect, had closed his most emphatic charge—'I impeach Warren Hastings in the name of our holy religion, which he has disgraced; I impeach him in the name of the English Constitution, which he has violated and broken; I impeach him in the name of Indian millions whom he has sacrificed to injustice; I impeach him in the name and by the best rights of human nature, which he has stabbed to the heart. And I conjure this high and sacred Court not to let these pleadings be heard in vain'—the very peers who had to try the charge said 'Hear, hear.' Some of the most distinguished of the peeresses fainted away at the recital of the horrors which his fertile imagination had conjured up against the agents of the accused; and had the coroneted judges proceeded immediately to their Painted Chamber and voted forthwith, there is little doubt they would have pronounced a judgment of 'Guilty' almost by acclamation." But

fortunately for the prisoner, fortunately for the cause of justice, the trial was so protracted that the effect of Burke's perfluvy advocacy was dissipated in a morass of evidence and formalities. To revive the drooping interest, the great orator resorted to humour. "The rajah," he said, "had been arrested at the hour of his devotions. It was alleged in extenuation of the disgrace that he was not a Brahmin. Suppose the Lord Chancellor (Thurlow) should be found at his devotions—the keeper of the King's conscience. Suppose he should be taken away. Would it remove the indignity that he was not a bishop? No! The Chancellor would know and feel the disgrace. He would think of the devotions he had lost, and he would not care whether he were a bishop or no!" The sally had its effect. "None," says the reporter, "was grave but the Lord Chancellor himself." But it was a mere flash in the pan. Interest, which was at first at white heat, became more and more attenuated, until the final scenes were marked by a display of public weariness and indifference, and even aversion. As for the criminal—"the Captain-General of Iniquity," as he had been called by his rancorous accusers—the best opinion more and more inclined to the view that he was a greatly ill-used man. When, therefore, on April 23rd, 1795, on the one hundred and forty-ninth day of the trial, an acquittal was pronounced by twenty-three peers against six, the result was received with unbounded satisfaction in all but the most partisan quarters. The trial lasted

seven years; if the reckoning is made from the time Burke gave his notice of the impeachment to the day of the acquittal, the proceedings extended over ten years—a period which, as Seward says, "might vie for duration with the siege of Troy."

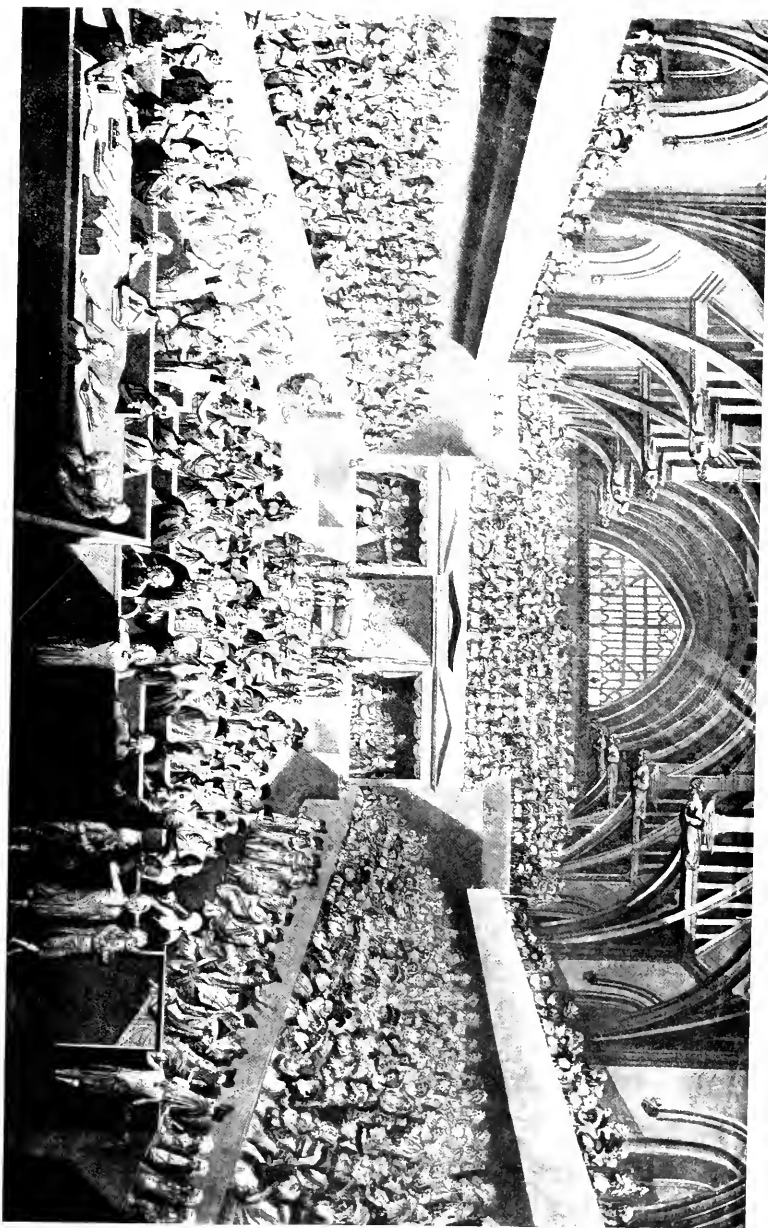
Only on one other occasion was the cumbrous machinery of impeachment put into motion in the great Hall of Rufus. This was in the well-known case of Lord Melville, who on June 21st, 1806, was brought to the Bar, under circumstances to be narrated in a later chapter, on charges of malversation of public funds in connection with the administration of the Navy, of which he was the administrative head. In the result he was acquitted by a large majority of his brother peers, and he lived long enough to win back the entire confidence of Wilberforce and other friends whose suspicions had in a measure led to the inquiry.

In a future chapter we shall have something to say of the coronation festivities of which the Hall has been the scene from the earliest days of its existence to the beginning of the present century. Meanwhile, we take leave of this building with a vivid sense of the difficulty, inseparable from the scheme of the work, of compressing into a short space an adequate survey of the moving events of its strange, eventful history, and of the conspicuous part it has played in the life of the nation.



THE DUCHESS OF KINGSTON.

Tried for bigamy in Westminster Hall. The lower picture gives a representation of the trial.



THE TRIAL OF WARREN HASTINGS IN WESTMINSTER HALL.

This celebrated trial of the great Indian administrator continued for seven years. It was fully reported on April 29th, 1795.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PALACE BY FIRE.*

On the night of Thursday, October 16th, 1834, visitors travelling by coach to London were confronted with a magnificent spectacle. The whole of the metropolis was illuminated by a vast conflagration. Flames leapt high in air, and a dense column of black smoke rolled sullenly away northwards. Eager questions to ostlers at stopping-places as the distant suburbs were reached soon elicited an explanation of the phenomena. The Houses of Parliament were on fire! Throughout that night practically all London congregated about Westminster to watch the remorseless march of the fire as it swept from building to building with incredible rapidity. Three regiments of Guards hardly sufficed to keep back the excited crowd which surged about

Old Palace Yard. On the river an immense number of small craft, filled with spectators, contributed to the animation of the scene. For hours the fire continued without any stay to its progress. In turn the House of Lords, the Painted Chamber, the Royal Gallery, the library of the House of Commons, and the residences of the chief officials were consumed. It seemed at one time that the whole of the group of buildings would be utterly destroyed, but the massive masonry of Westminster Hall fortunately proved a barrier too stout for the flames to overcome. As morning began to dawn, with a feeling of intense relief the great concourse, which included in its ranks peers and Ministers, members of Parliament and high officials, saw that the worst was over, and that the matchless building was not to be involved in the general ruin. But the Palace itself was a thing of the past. Only a shapeless mass of gaunt and blackened walls remained to indicate the



THE BURNING OF THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, OCTOBER 16TH, 1834. AS SEEN FROM THE RIVER.

A reproduction of the famous picture by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.

features of the ancient home of the Norman and Plantagenet Kings.

The story of the origin of the fire is not so familiar that it may not be retold with interest. At the time the event occurred there were strong suspicions that it was the result of political incendiarism. Colour was lent to this theory by an extraordinary statement made by a Mr. Cooper, a member of a firm of ironfounders carrying on business in Drury Lane. This individual averred that at eight o'clock on Thursday, October 16th, 1834, he went into the commercial room of the Bush Inn at Dudley, and whilst he was drinking some tea one of the travellers there went out, and returning in about two minutes, observed: "I have just heard that the House of Lords is burnt down, occasioned by some carpenters being careless with the shavings." Upon this one of the other travellers asked: "Is it in the paper?" The reply was: "No, it cannot have got into the paper." "How did you hear it?" was the next question. To this response was made by the traveller who brought the intelligence that his informant was a person on the coach. This was the story, and a remarkable story it was, for it implied that in days when the electric telegraph was unknown as a means of communication, and the quickest method of conveying intelligence was by stage coach, the news of the fire at Westminster, which did not break out until seven o'clock, was known at Dudley, 119 miles off, three hours later. If Mr. Cooper's statements were true, there was clearly only one explanation of the conflagration—that it was the outcome of a plot. But a subsequent searching investigation proved conclusively that they could not be true. Not only was there evidence of a negative character to controvert the statement that an announcement of the outbreak was made in the commercial room of the Bush Inn at Dudley on the night of the fire, but Mr. Cooper contradicted himself to such an extent under examination before the Committee of Lords of the Council which investigated the causes of the fire, as to completely discount the value of anything he said. Whether he was suffering under some extraordinary hallucination, or whether he had simply trumped up a fictitious and sensational narrative of the origin of the fire for purposes of notoriety, it is impossible to say; but the Lords of the Council had no hesitation in disbelieving his story, and their attitude was the only possible one in the circumstances. Other evidence given at the inquiry showed convincingly that the fire was due to accidental and easily explainable causes.

The factor in producing the conflagration was a very simple one. It was nothing more than an overheated flue, brought about by careless burning, in a furnace under the Peers' chamber, of an accumulation of "tallies" and "foils," left by the old Court of Exchequer when it was abolished in 1826. The tally and the foil, it should be explained, were pieces of stick of unequal lengths used for the purpose of recording the sums paid into the Exchequer. As they had been in store for some time, they were dry and highly inflammable. Usually they



ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL, LOOKING EAST, AFTER THE FIRE,  
Showing the ancient walls of the Chapel.



THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, AS THEY WERE BEFORE THE FIRE OF  
OCTOBER 16TH, 1834.

had been disposed of either by making an *auto da fé* in Palace Yard or Tothill Fields, or by the simpler expedient of using them for firewood as occasion offered in the Government offices. But in an evil moment, in order to completely clear the old tally room for use for other purposes, an order was given for a wholesale burning, without any specific instructions as to the place where the operation was to be performed. Mr. Weobley, the clerk of the works, unhappily conceived the idea of utilising the stoves in the House of Lords for the purpose. With careful firing, perhaps there would have been no great danger, but the work was practically left to two workmen, who, animated by a not unnatural desire to get through their task quickly, piled the wood upon the fire with a rapidity which soon produced ominous results. Some visitors looking over the House about four o'clock noticed that the floor beneath Black Rod's box was quite warm to the feet, and remarked on the danger that there seemed to be from fire. Mrs. Wright, the housekeeper, however, made some reassuring remarks as to the safety conferred on the building by the fact of the floor being of stone. The visitors were not convinced. One of them spoke of the suffocating heat, and another commented regretfully on the circumstance that there was so much smoke that he could not see the tapestries on the walls, and found it impossible to discern the throne from the Bar. The official optimism, however, was proof against all evidence of danger. Beyond conveying several warnings to the men tending the fire, neither Mrs. Wright nor any other responsible official did anything until a little after six o'clock. Then there was the clearest proof that the House was indeed on fire. One of the female servants who went out on an errand about that time returned screaming, "Oh, good God, the House of Lords is on fire!" Thinking that it might be only the matting that was alight, Mrs. Wright took the keys and opened the door of the chamber, but she was soon convinced that a much greater disaster than that was in progress. Flames were leaping up from Black Rod's box, and the interior was filled with dust and smoke. The alarm was loudly given, and the fire engines—puny affairs, mere squirts compared with the powerful





RUINS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AFTER THE FIRE.

appliances of to-day—were sent for. But the flames had got too great a mastery to be denied. So rapid was the spread of the conflagration that it was with the greatest difficulty that the most valuable of the records were removed from the offices in the Peers' buildings to St. Margaret's Church across the way for safe custody. In this connection Sir John E. Dorington, Bart., the present member for the Tewkesbury division of Gloucestershire, whose father was Chief Engrossing Clerk and Clerk of the Fees of the House of Commons, tells an interesting story. He states that on the night of the fire his father was dining at the Athenæum Club, and hearing the cry of "Fire!" went out. Discovering, on inquiry, that the outbreak was at the House of Lords, he rushed off to his office to save his papers. He managed to get in without any great difficulty, but he had barely time to open the drawers where the documents were left when an attendant burst into the room and said he was in danger of being caught. A look around convinced Mr. Dorington of the accuracy of that statement. All the passages were filled with smoke, and the threatening roar of the flames came every moment nearer and nearer. Deeming discretion the better part of valour, the zealous official beat a hasty retreat, leaving not only his papers, but his keys behind him. As it was, he only just managed to escape with his life.

Another interesting reminiscence is supplied by Dean Stanley in his well-known work on Westminster Abbey. Writing of the associations of the Chapter House, and of its uses as a Record Chamber, he says: "On the night of the fire which consumed the Houses of Parliament in 1834, when thousands were gathered below watching the flames, when the waning affection for our ancient national monuments seemed to be revived in that crisis of their fate—where, as the conflagration was driven by the wind towards Westminster Hall, the innumerable faces of that vast multitude, lighted up in the broad glare with more than the light of day, were visibly swayed by the agitations of the devouring breeze, and one voice, one prayer seemed to go up from every upturned countenance, 'Oh! save the Hall': on that night two small figures might have been seen standing on the roof of the Chapter House overlooking the terrific blaze, parted from them only by the narrow space of Old Palace Yard. One was the Keeper of the Records,

Sir F. Palgrave, the other was Dean Ireland. They had climbed up through the hole in the roof to witness the awful scene. Suddenly a gust of wind swept the flames in that direction. Palgrave, with all the enthusiasm of the antiquarian and of his own eager temperament, turned to the Dean and suggested that they should descend to the Chapter House and carry off its most valuable treasures into the Abbey for safety. Dean Ireland, with the caution belonging at once to his office and his character, answered that he could not think of doing so without applying to Lord Melbourne, the First Lord of the Treasury." As it proved, there was no real need to take the step proposed by the Keeper of the Records. The Chapter House was happily left unscathed, with all its priceless muniments. But great destruction was nevertheless wrought with valuable records preserved in the Parliamentary buildings.

As has already been stated, the fire left of the old Palace of Westminster little beyond Westminster Hall and a few gutted buildings. It was at first hoped that it might be possible



THE CLOISTER COURT, ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL, AFTER THE FIRE.

This part of the ruins was preserved and restored.

to restore St. Stephen's Chapel and some other portions of the original structure, but careful expert examination showed the impossibility of this, excepting at an enormous cost, which would not be justifiable in the circumstances. Generally it was felt that though sentiment might have been permitted to stand in the way of the demolition of the block of buildings embraced in the ancient limits of the Palace, it was absurd to allow it to be the means of creating a patchwork arrangement only, as the restored building must inevitably be. The time for makeshifts had passed. Not only the dignity of Parliament, but its convenience, demanded that the two assemblies should be accommodated in a home more imposing in size and architectural pretensions than the one which had hitherto done duty as such. This view, popularly held, was, after close investigation and long consideration, supported by a decision of a Select Committee which was appointed to consider the matter. This body presented a report in June, 1835, embodying its views in a series of resolutions. These recommended the holding of a competition for the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament, and that the design of the new structure should be

either Gothic or Elizabethan; and that the King should be requested to appoint five Commissioners, who should examine the plans offered by competition, and select from their number "not less than three nor more than five, as shall seem to them most worthy of attention." Four premiums of £500 each were promised, and it was understood that the architect receiving the first premium should be employed to undertake the work unless some grave cause to the contrary were discovered, in which case he was to receive a premium of £1,000.

The conclusions of the Committee were accepted by the Government, and a competition instituted, with the result that ninety-seven architects entered the lists. On November 1st, 1835, the designs were sent in; on February 29th, 1836, the award was published. The successful competitor was Mr. Charles Barry, an architect who had already attained some eminence in his profession as the designer of the Travellers' Club, the Reform Club, and Bridge-water House, and the remodeller of Highclere House. The report of the Commissioners, in which the decision was set forth, stated that they had confined themselves "to the consideration of the beauty and grandeur of the general design, to its practicability, to the skill shown in the various arrangements of the building, and the accommodation afforded"; and that on these grounds they assigned the palm to Mr. Barry. But while accepting his designs, and expressing confidence in the author's skill in Gothic architecture, they strongly recommended that "as the beauty of this depends upon the attention to detail, for which the architect has no rule to guide him," his drawings should be submitted from time to time "to competent judges of their effect, lest from over-confidence, negligence, or inattention in the execution of the work, we fail to obtain that result to which our just expectations have been raised."

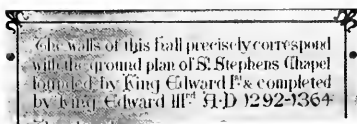


DEAN IRELAND,

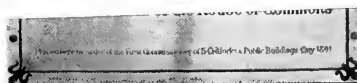
Who witnessed the destruction of the Houses of Parliament by fire from the roof of the Chapter House.

This proposal to appoint a controlling Commission was accepted by Mr. Barry without demur, much to the disgust of some of his professional colleagues, who held that he should have declined to submit to so unusual a demand. Later on Mr. Barry himself probably would have cordially subscribed to this view. But in the flush of victory he doubtless was not disposed to scrutinise too carefully

conditions under which it had been won. He is more concerned with the criticisms of his plans, which closely touched not only his capacity, but even the fairness of the award. His design was objected to as over-ornamented and meretricious, and comment was made on the dangerously artistic character of the wings as tending to mislead the judges, who were temptuously denounced as "mere amateurs." These indirect attacks were followed by overt action on the part of disappointed competitors. At a meeting held after the exhibition of the competitive designs in Westminster Hall, it was decided to petition Parliament to set aside the award on the ground that in the accepted design considerations of expense and the conditions of the competition were disregarded. Mr. Hume undertook to present the petition, and he did



The description of the picture on page 197 should read "The Coronation of Queen Victoria in Westminster Abbey."



TABLET IN ST. STEPHEN'S HALL,

Placed to indicate to the visitor the exact position of the old St. Stephen's Chapel.

so on June 22nd, 1836, following up his action by a formal attack a month later. But the Government would not hear of any change in the arrangements. Sir Robert Peel pointed out that to adopt the prayer of the petition would be to destroy the whole principle of competition and endanger the public faith. He added an expression of compassion for Mr. Barry, as a man "hunted and pursued" because he was successful. In this strong attitude the Ministry was sustained by the issuing of a protest by twelve competitors against "the indecorous and unprofessional attempts" to upset the Commission's decision, on the ground that such proceedings tended to disunion in the architectural profession. This timely expression of opinion had its effect. Attacks became less and less frequent, until they died away in a few anonymous mutterings to which not the least attention was given.

At last the way was cleared for the commencement of the work. With high hopes Mr. Barry entered upon his task. Popular interest in and approval of his design compensated him for professional injustice, while there was much in the magnitude of the building he was employed upon to inspire him with a feeling of elation. He did not then see the difficulties and harassing disputes which were to cast a dark shadow over his life. Had he done so, possibly he might have paused before he accepted the responsibility, honourable and full of distinction though it was.

A grant of money made by the House of Commons, on July 3rd, 1837, was the first step taken towards the erection of the new building. It was followed almost immediately by the commencement of operations. The initial move was the construction of the river wall. This was a work of great costliness, and no slight engineering difficulty. "A coffer dam was constructed, and the foundations of the wall laid upon concrete, which in some places is as much as twelve feet in thickness.

At the very outset of the work unforeseen difficulties were encountered, and unforeseen expenses incurred. The soil of the bed of the river was found to be very treacherous, in many places little better than a quicksand, and unfortunately the same character attached to the ground under a large portion of the building. Great care, however, was taken with the foundations, and they were made thoroughly satisfactory. Still, as an additional precaution, Mr. Barry resolved not to draw the piles of the coffer dam, as had been at first intended, but to cut them off level with the dredged bed of the river, in order that the lower part of the dam might remain as a kind of fender or outwork to the wall, protecting it against the scour of the river, which has in other places proved so dangerous to the stability of buildings."<sup>1</sup>

This important preliminary operation, completed in 1839, was quickly followed by the prosecution of the work upon the structure. On April 27th, 1840, with little or no ceremony, and only passing public notice, the first stone of the vast pile was laid by the wife of the architect. For more than twelve years the building operations continued, years to the architect of strife and bitterness and keen disappointment. It is not within the



*From a portrait in the National Portrait Gallery.*

SIR CHARLES BARRY,

The great architect, who designed the Houses of Parliament and superintended their erection.

<sup>1</sup> "The Life and Works of Sir C. Barry."



*From a post published May 21st, 1856.*

#### THE NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

The design by Sir Charles Barry which was accepted, but carried out in a greatly modified form.

province of this work to go minutely into the half-forgotten controversies which raged around the building of the new Houses of Parliament. They created much excitement at the time, but to-day they have little other than a purely historical interest. It may be said, however, that Sir Charles Barry almost from the outset found himself in a position of discomfort. First, the Government appointed Dr. Reid to superintend the ventilating and warming of the building, and so introduced an element of discord which left its mark upon the progress of the building. Then in 1844 there was serious trouble because, to meet official demands for fresh accommodation, the architect had without authority varied his plans in several minor particulars. Following this, and as a consequence of the action taken in regard to it, a Commission was on March 17th, 1848, appointed "to superintend the completion of the new Palace," and the way was paved for an almost unending succession of disputes upon points connected with the internal arrangements. Again, there was a tremendous controversy, with numerous ramifications, over the designing of the great clock. Lastly, an undignified squabble which went on for years, outlasting, in fact, the life of the architect, took place as to the remuneration which should be paid to Mr. Barry, the authorities insisting on the payment of a lump sum, while the architect stood out for the observance of the professional custom of a percentage on the outlay. These various wrangles naturally materially tended to protract the work of construction. It was as late as February, 1847, that the first completed portion of the new buildings, the House of Lords, was occupied, and some considerable further time elapsed before the House of Commons entered into possession of its new home. Not until 1852, when the Royal Approach was completed and Queen Victoria made for the first time her public entrance to the new buildings, may the great work be said to have been consummated. Even then the towers and other architectural features remained to be constructed. These engaged attention until the year 1860. Thus, it was twenty years after the first stone was laid, and when the architect had been borne to his last resting-place in Westminster Abbey, a saddened and broken-hearted man, that the final touches were put upon the splendid design.

The cost of the building was enormous, far in excess of the most liberal calculations.

In the original estimate the amount required was put down at £707,104. It was hopelessly short of the mark. A Parliamentary paper issued in 1850 showed that the amount expended or to be expended up to that time reached the enormous total of £1,997,216 15s. 11d. Even this sum does not adequately represent all that the building actually cost. At least another half-million would have to be added to obtain the proper total. This great excess on the original estimate was made a subject of severe censure of the architect during his lifetime.



*Engraving by J. H. St. John, after a drawing by Sir Charles Barry, the present design of Mr. John Lubbock.*

#### THE NEW PALACE AT WESTMINSTER.

View from the south-east of Sir Charles Barry's proposed additional building, on the site of New Palace Yard. These additions were frequently discussed, but never adopted.

It was, in fact, the most serious count in the indictment brought against him by his critics. His son, however, ably, and on the whole successfully, defends him<sup>1</sup> from the charge of extravagance. The building, he shows, as completed, widely differed from the structure that Sir Charles Barry had designed. Not only had considerable additions been made to it to meet official exigencies, but a sum of half a million had been expended on furniture, fittings, and decorations which had not been provided for in the first estimate. The simple truth of the matter no doubt is that the great pile was to a large extent a product of development. It grew with the progress of the time and with the march of opinion as to what was really essential to the equipment of the home of the Imperial Legislature. In subsequent chapters we shall describe in detail the new buildings as completed.

<sup>1</sup> "The Life and Works of Sir C. Barry."

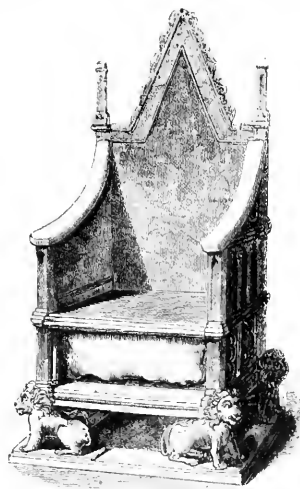
## CHAPTER XIV.

### *CORONATION CEREMONIES AT THE PALACE.*

BEFORE taking leave of the old Palace of Westminster it is desirable, especially in view of the circumstances of the time at which this work is issued, that some description should be given of the pageantry of which it was the witness in connection with coronations. In recent years, with the fixing of the personal residence of the Sovereign mainly outside London, this aspect of the historic site by the Thames has been rather obscured. But in reality, if the great building had never been associated with the life of Parliament or the administration of the law, it would always have been famous as the spot on which had been celebrated a remarkable series of spectacles connected with the accession of the English Kings. With the exception of the late Sovereign of happy memory and her immediate predecessor, there was scarcely an occupant of the English throne from the time of Henry III. who had not mounted to it by way of Westminster Hall. Even before that period the Palace was in a peculiar sense identified with the ceremonies in connection with the beginning of a new reign. Indeed, it may safely be asserted that so long as there has been a Palace at Westminster so long has there existed a close association between the building and the rites which have been the outward and visible sign of the monarch's title to power.

William the Conqueror, with that practical, business-like instinct which was a marked trait of his character, quickly realised the value of a Westminster coronation; and as soon as he had made his footing in the country sure, he caused elaborate preparations to be undertaken for a ceremony in the Abbey with the old impressive ritual, and an added element of distinction lent by the splendour of Norman pageantry. An untoward incident during the ceremony went nearly to involving the affair in disaster. At the culminating point in the service, where the question was asked, "Will ye have this Prince to be your King?" a great shout of approval was sent up by the congregation, and the Norman soldiery outside, hearing it, believed that the English had revolted. Acting on this assumption, they started to fire and plunder the houses. The tumult was only quelled after it had continued many hours and much mischief had been done. Meanwhile William, trembling with apprehension, had gone through the service to its close, and we may be certain that there was little festivity or rejoicing in the Palace that night.

William Rufus, like his father, was crowned at Westminster, but the meagre accounts of the ceremony do not indicate to what extent the Palace shared in the proceedings. Profiting by the existence of Westminster Hall, his successor, after his crowning in the Abbey, received "all the chief men of England,



THE CORONATION CHAIR,  
On which all the Kings of England from William the  
Conqueror have been crowned.

both clergy and laity," in the Palace. Similarly Stephen, who was crowned on St. Stephen's Day, 1135, in honour of the occasion held a splendid festival in the Palace, to which all his leading subjects were invited. These precedents were followed in successive reigns. When Henry III. was crowned King in the lifetime of his father in 1170, we gather from the records that a grand banquet was given in Westminster Hall. Upon this occasion the father served his son at the table as sewer, "bringing up the bore's head with trumpets before it according to the manner. Whereupon," proceeds the quaint chronicle of Holinshed, "the young man, conceiving a pride in his heart, beheld the standers-by with a more stately countenance than he had wont; the Archbishop of Yorke, who sat by him, marking his behaviour, turned unto him and said, 'Be glad, my good sonne, there is not another Prince in the world that hath such a sewer at his table.' To which the newe King answered disdainfullie thus: 'Why doest thou marvel at that? My father in doing it, thinketh it not more than becometh him; he being borne of princelie blood onlie on the mother's side, serveth me that am a King borne, having both a King to my father and a Queen to my mother.' Thus the young man, of an evill and perverse nature, was puffed up in pride by his father's unseemlie doinge." It is difficult to say whether this story is more than the



*English Chronicle, 1170.*

THE CROWN OFFERED TO HAROLD BY THE PEOPLE.



THE CORONATION OF HAROLD AT WESTMINSTER.

gossip of the old Fathers, but it is certainly perfectly consistent with the mean-spirited character of the Prince of whom it is related. More tangible than the narrative of this abortive coronation are the records of the festivities which accompanied the elevation of Richard I. to the throne. These were conducted with all the pomp and display of the age, and were participated in by the leading men of the country. In the writings of eye-witnesses we have for the first time mention of the association of the chief citizen of London with the ceremony in the capacity of Chief Butler, and of the appointment of the chief burgesses of Winchester to serve up the viands. But records of the earlier coronation feasts in Westminster Hall are meagre, and it is not until we come to the coronation of Henry III.'s Queen, Eleanor, in 1236, that we have any detailed description. Of this pageant Matthew Paris, however, supplies a vivid picture. "At the nuptial feast," he says, "were assembled such a multitude of the nobility of both sexes, such numbers of the religious, such a vast body of the people, and such a variety of players (*histriones*) that the City of London could scarcely contain them in her capacious bosom. In the procession the Earl of Chester bore before the King the sword of St. Edward the Confessor, called *cartana*, in token of his being Earl of the Palace, *comes palatii*, and having authority to restrain the King if he should do wrong; as Constable of Chester he kept back the people with his rod when they pressed too forward. The High Marshal of England (the Earl of Pembroke) carried a rod before the King, both in the





*From the picture by John Opie, R.A.*

#### THE CORONATION OF HENRY VI.

This King was crowned both in London and in Paris. He was in the ninth year of his age at the time of the coronation in Westminster Abbey.



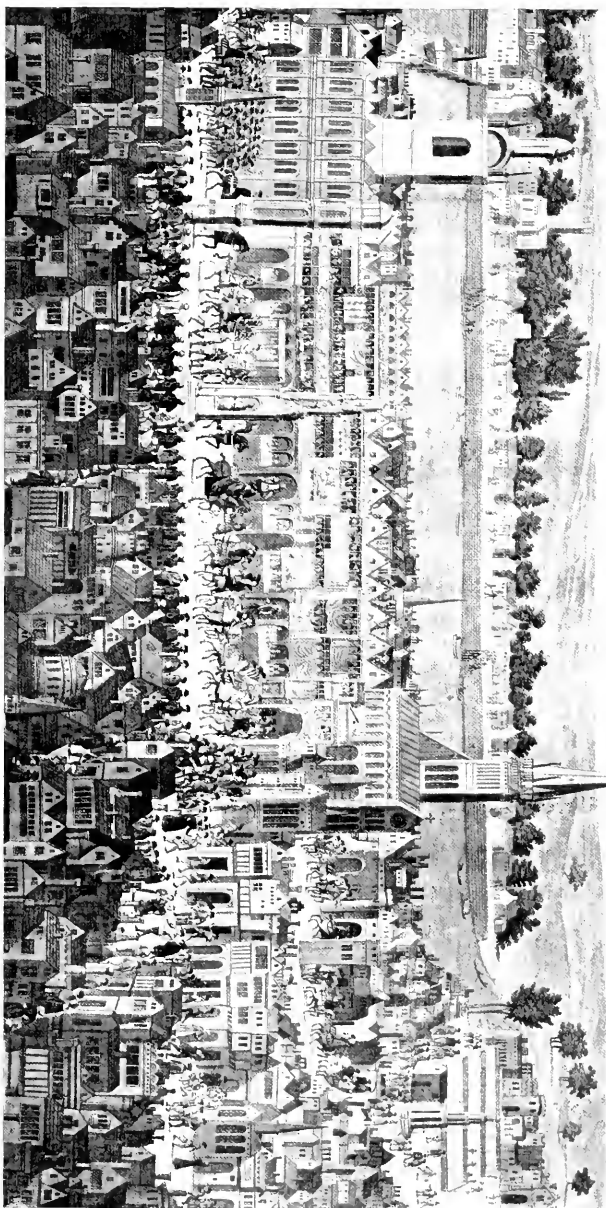
From the portrait in the J. Vernon Chamber.

RICHARD II. IN HIS CORONATION ROBES.

Church and in the Hall, making way for the King, and arranging the guests at the Royal table. The barons, *custodes* of the Cinque Ports, bare a canopy over the King supported on five spears, though from some contentious scruples they had almost neglected their duty. The Earl of Leicester held water for the King to wash before dinner. The Earl of Warenne officiated as the Royal cup-bearer, in lieu of the Earl of Arundel, who was a youth not yet knighted. Master Michael Belet had the office of butler. The Earl of Hereford was marshal of the King's household. William de Beauchamp was almoner. The justiciary of the forests removed the doles from the King's table, though he was at first impeded. The citizens of London poured the wine abundantly into precious cups; the citizens of Winchester had oversight of the kitchen and napery, and others officiated according to their various claims, which were decided *salvo jure*, so that they might be substantiated on a fitter occasion, and the joy of the nuptial feast not be interrupted by contention. The chancellor, the chamberlain, the marshal, and the constable, took their seats with reference to their offices, and all the barons in the order of their creation. 'The solemnity,' the writer goes on to say, "was resplendent with the clergy and knights, properly placed. But how shall I describe the dainties of the table, and the abundance of divers liquors, the quantity of game, the variety of fish, the multitude of jesters, and the attention of the waiters? Whatever

the world pours forth of pleasure and glory was there especially displayed."

The splendour of this feast was surpassed by that arranged in 1274 in honour of the coronation of Edward I. To furnish the material needs of the occasion the country was ransacked for supplies weeks previously. Eventually there were forthcoming 440 oxen and cows, 430 sheep, 450 pigs, 16 fat boars, 278 fitches of bacon, and 22,460 capons, besides other poultry. The feast was attended by the King of Scotland, accompanied by one hundred knights on horseback, "who as soon as they had dismounted turned their steeds loose for any one to catch and keep that thought proper." Following the Scotch King came Edmund, Earl of Arundel, and the Earls of Gloucester, Pembroke, and Warenne, "each having in their company a hundred illustrious knights, wearing their lords' armour; and when they had alighted from their palfreys they also set them free, that whoever chose might take them unquestioned." Meanwhile, the aqueduct in Chepe "poured forth white and red wine like rain-water, for those who would, to drink at pleasure." This custom of supplying wine for the populace



*View of London from the tower of St. Martin, designed by James Blore.*

# THE CORONATION PROCESSION OF EDWARD VI. PROCEEDING FROM THE TOWER TO WESTMINSTER ON THURSDAY 17TH, 1547.

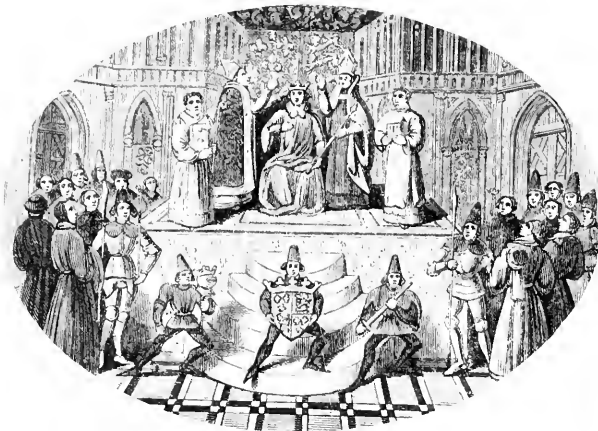
It was the custom for several centuries for the monarch to sleep the night before his coronation at the Tower of London, and on the day of the ceremony to make a state progress through the City to Westminster. The view shows the *route* passing through Chancery.

at coronations must have involved great expense. A document exists which shows that in the next reign a thousand pipes of wine were ordered from Bordeaux for the coronation. Nor were the creature comforts the only heavy charge. One of the bills preserved amongst the records gives in minute detail the articles required for the fitting up of Westminster Hall and the Abbey for Edward III.'s coronation. The total cost was £1,056 19s. 3d., an enormous sum for those days. But, indeed, the whole arrangements were conceived on a scale of profuse magnificence—so much so, that it took years to discharge the liabilities incurred.

A coronation marked by special magnificence was that of Richard II. On the day before the actual ceremony the King rode from the Tower to Westminster accompanied by a brilliant cavalcade of noblemen and citizens. Arrived at Westminster, he, according to the record in the Close Rolls, "entered the Great Hall of the Palace, and going up to the high marble table which stood in it, asked for wine, which being brought he drank of it, as did others standing around him. The King then retired with the princes and his family to his chamber,

where he supped royally, and having bathed becomingly he retired to rest.

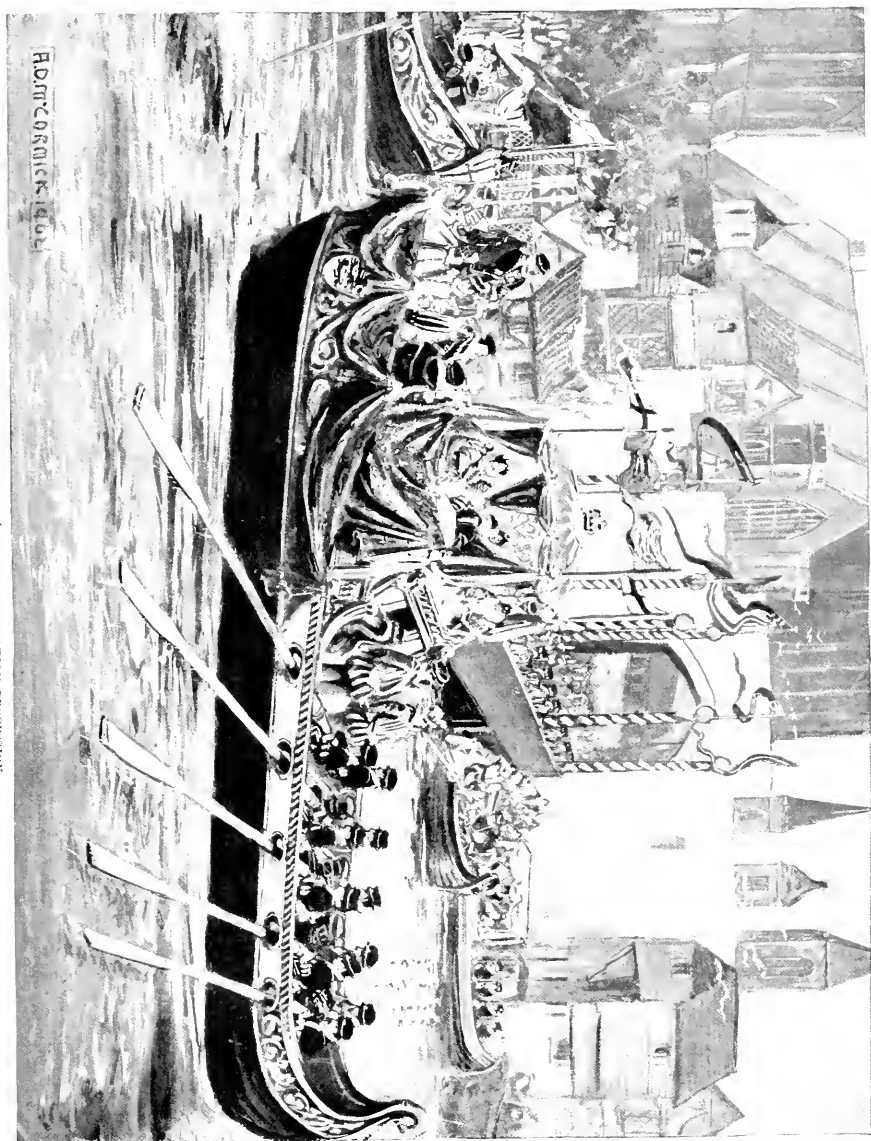
"In the morning the King arose, and having heard mass, he was clothed in the purest vestments, and wore slippers or buskins only on his feet; he quitted his room and descended into the Great Hall with a full attendance of princes and nobles. There came to meet him the Archbishop of Canterbury (Simon Sudbury) and other prelates in pontifical habits, and the clergy of the realm in silken copes, with a great concourse of people at the high table in the Hall." Thereafter



*From a Harleian MS.*

THE CORONATION OF HENRY IV.

a procession was formed and the King proceeded along a covered way to the Abbey, where the usual rites were performed. Returning to the Palace, the King "descended into the Great Hall, and having washed his hands, sat down in the Royal seat at the high table, where sat with him many on either hand. On the right side of the Hall the Barons of the Cinque Ports occupied the first table, the Clerks of the Chancery the second; and at the inferior tables on that side were the King's Judges, the Barons of the Exchequer, and others. On the left side of the Hall were tables for the Sheriffs, Recorder, Aldermen, and many of the citizens of London. In the middle were tables filled by distinguished men of the Commons of the Kingdom. . . . During the continuance of the entertainment the Lord Steward, the Constable, and the Earl Marshal, with certain knights deputed by them, rode about the Hall on noble coursers to preserve peace and order among the people. All the time the Earl of Derby stood at the King's right hand, holding the principal sword, drawn from its scabbard. The Earl of Strafford performed the office of chief carver. Dinner being finished, the King arose and went to his chamber with the prelates, great men, and nobles before mentioned. Then the great men, knights, and lords passed the remainder of the day until supper time in shews, dances, and solemn minstrelsy; and having supped, the King and others retired to rest, fatigued with their exertions in this magnificent festival."



ADMIRAL CROMWELL

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S RIVER CORONATION PROCESSION.

On the night before her coronation Queen Elizabeth proceeded from Westminster to the Tower to sleep there according to the established practice. The coronation was marked by a splendid water pageant.



*After Sir Anthony Van Dyck.*

CHARLES I. IN HIS CORONATION ROBES.  
One of many portraits extant of the King.

It is at this coronation that we first catch a glimpse of the King's Champion, a familiar figure in later ceremonies. This functionary was a creation of the spirit of chivalry which permeated all the institutions of the country, regal and national, at this period. His duty was to attend the coronation festivity to challenge to mortal combat all who should dare to question the Royal right to the crown. The manner of his coming was strictly laid down in the regulations for the pageant. In the case of Richard's II.'s coronation, according to Walsingham, the holder of the office, Sir John Dymok, "made a mistake of the juncture at which he should come in. Equipping himself with the best suit of armour, save one, and the best steed, save one, from the King's armoury and stable, he proceeded on horseback, with two attendants (the one bearing his spear, and the other his shield), to the Abbey gates, there to wait the ending of the mass. But the Lord Marshal, the Lord Seneschal, and the Lord Constable, with Sir Thomas Percy, being all mounted

on their great horses, went to the knight and told him that he should not have come so soon, but when the King was at dinner; wherefore he had better retire, and, laying aside his weighty armour, rest himself until the proper time." It is surmised by some commentators that the Champion in proceeding to the Abbey in this instance was seeking to uphold an ancient right to ride in the procession as well as to appear in the Hall. Be that as it may, it is certain that on all subsequent occasions the Champion's appearance was confined to Westminster Hall, where, however, it was an essential feature of the festivity. Mounted on a snow-white steed, and accompanied by a brilliant retinue of esquires, heralds, and mace-bearers, it was his custom to ride in at the great door, and advancing to the top end of the Hall, to call upon his herald to deliver the challenge. This was done in the following terms:—

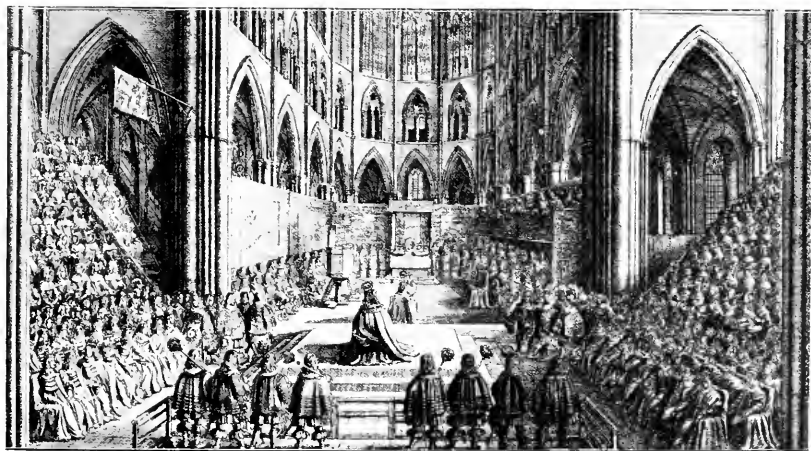
"If any person, of what degree soever, high or low, shall gainsay our Sovereign Lord King—, King of England and France, Defender of the Faith, etc., to be right heir to the

imperial crown of this realm, or that he ought not to enjoy the same; here is his Champion, who saith that he lyeth, and is a false traytor, being ready in person to combat with him; and in this quarrel will adventure his life against him, on what day soever he shall be appointed."

The words uttered, amid a flourish of trumpets the Champion threw down the gauntlet three times. On the third occasion it was customary for the King to drink to the Champion in a gold cup and then to pass it on to the knight, who in turn drank to the King. The gold cup became a perquisite of the Champion, together with the suit of armour he wore and the horse he rode at the ceremony.

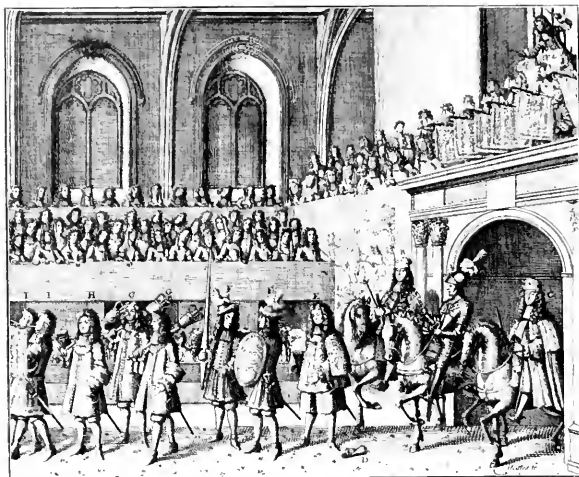
It is difficult to say who first discharged the office, or even when the custom was instituted. There is good ground for the belief, however, that in the reign of Henry I. a certain Roger Marmion, who died in 1129, was King's Champion. This individual exercised the functions by virtue of his tenure of the manors of Tamworth and Scrivelsby. Through him the post descended to Philip Marmion, who is believed to have acted as Champion at Edward I.'s coronation. Philip Marmion's death without male issue, and the consequent diversion of the manor into the female line, led to a prolonged dispute between the De Frevelles and the Dymmoks, both descendants of Jane, Marmion's eldest daughter. Eventually the Dymmoks, to use an appropriate metaphor, became firmly seated in the saddle, and successive members of the family performed the duties until the accession of George IV., when for the last time the Champion, in the person of Henry Dymoke, representing the Rev. John Dymoke, Rector of Scrivelsby, the head of the family, rode into Westminster Hall to proclaim his contempt for the King's enemies. Economical reasons, mainly, led to the abandonment of the ceremony (with the banquet) at the two subsequent coronations; and it is never likely to be revived, for, picturesque as the incident was, it would in its modern framing lose the suggestiveness and romance which lent to it in the old days its chief attractiveness.

The King's Champion has rather taken us from the course of our narrative, and it is necessary to revert to the reign of Richard II., to recall an incident of high historic interest and importance in connection with the subject we are treating. This was the accession of Henry IV., after the formal act of abdication performed by Richard while a prisoner in the



THE CORONATION OF CHARLES II. IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

It is noted as remarkable by the annalists that though it rained incessantly many days before and many after the ceremony, "the sunne shined gloriously all that day," and not a drop of rain fell.



THE CHAMPION PERFORMING THE CEREMONY OF THE CHALLENGE IN WESTMINSTER HALL AT THE CORONATION OF JAMES II.

so made. A great shout of approval supplied an affirmative answer, and thereafter, when sentence of deposition had been formally pronounced against Richard, the Duke of Lancaster, devoutly crossing himself, spoke as follows: "In the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this realm of England, and the crown, with all the members and appurtenances; as that I am descended by right line of the blood coming from the good Lord King Henry III.; and through the right that God, of His grace, hath sent me, with the help of my kin and of my friends, to recover it; the which realm was in point to be undone for default of governance and undoing of the good laws." Again the assembly clamorously signified its approbation of the act, and the new Sovereign was led to the throne by the two archbishops. Halting at the lower step, he knelt for a few minutes in silent prayer, and then was placed in the Royal seat by the two ecclesiastics. The announcement of various appointments, and the fixing of the following Monday for the coronation ceremony, brought to a termination a scene as important in its consequences as any that had hitherto been witnessed on that famous spot.

Shakespeare, with his keen instinct for the picturesque, has with poetic licence used the Hall as the setting for the great scene in *Richard II.* in which the act of renunciation was performed. Every Shakespearean student is familiar with the moving language which is put into the unfortunate King's mouth. First we have bitter reflections on his fallen state;—

Alack! why am I sent for to a King,  
Before I have shook off the regal thoughts  
Wherewith I reigned? I hardly yet have learned  
To insinuate, flatter, bow, and bend my limbs:  
Give sorrow leave awhile to tutor me  
To this submission. Yet I well remember  
The favours of these men: were they not mine?  
Did they not sometime cry, "All hail!" to me?  
So Julius did to Christ: but He in twelve  
Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none.

Tower. Very solemn and impressive were the proceedings in Parliament which passed in the Great Hall on this September 30th, 1399. The walls of the venerable building were "hung and trimmed sumptuously," and the managers of the affair had "caused to be set up a Royall chaire, on purpose to choose a newe King, neare to which the prelates were sat, and on the other side sat the Lords, and after, the Commons in order." Richard's renunciation was read aloud, and the Archbishop of Canterbury demanded of the States and people then present whether they would, for their own interest and the welfare of the realm, admit the cession



At last Richard brings himself to make the sacrifice. In these pathetic terms he completes the formal act of renunciation:—

I give this heavy weight from off my head,  
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand;  
The pride of kingly sway from out my heart;  
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,  
With mine own hands I give away my crown,  
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,  
With mine own breath release all duty's rites:  
All pomp and majesty I do for-ware.

Long mayst thou live in Richard's seat to sit,  
And soon lie Richard in an earthy pit!  
God save King Harry, unking'd Richard says.

There is greater warrant in history for another scene witnessed in the Hall of which stirring memories have been handed down to us. This was the episode in 1415 which marked the return of Henry V. from the glorious field of Agincourt. Modest as he was brave, the gallant King deprecated the excessive fervour of his subjects. He prohibited the singing of songs of conquest. "Neyther would he suffer to be carried before him, nor showed unto the people, his helmet whereupon his crown of gold was broke and deposed on the field by the violence of the enemy, nor his other armour that in that cruell battaile was so sore broken; but as the faithful constant champion of God, he eschewed all occasions of vaine glory, and refused the vaine praises of the people." A fitting pendant to this picture of the triumphant monarch received by his subjects was the reception a few months later by the King in the Hall of the Emperor Sigismund, to conclude a peace on behalf of France.



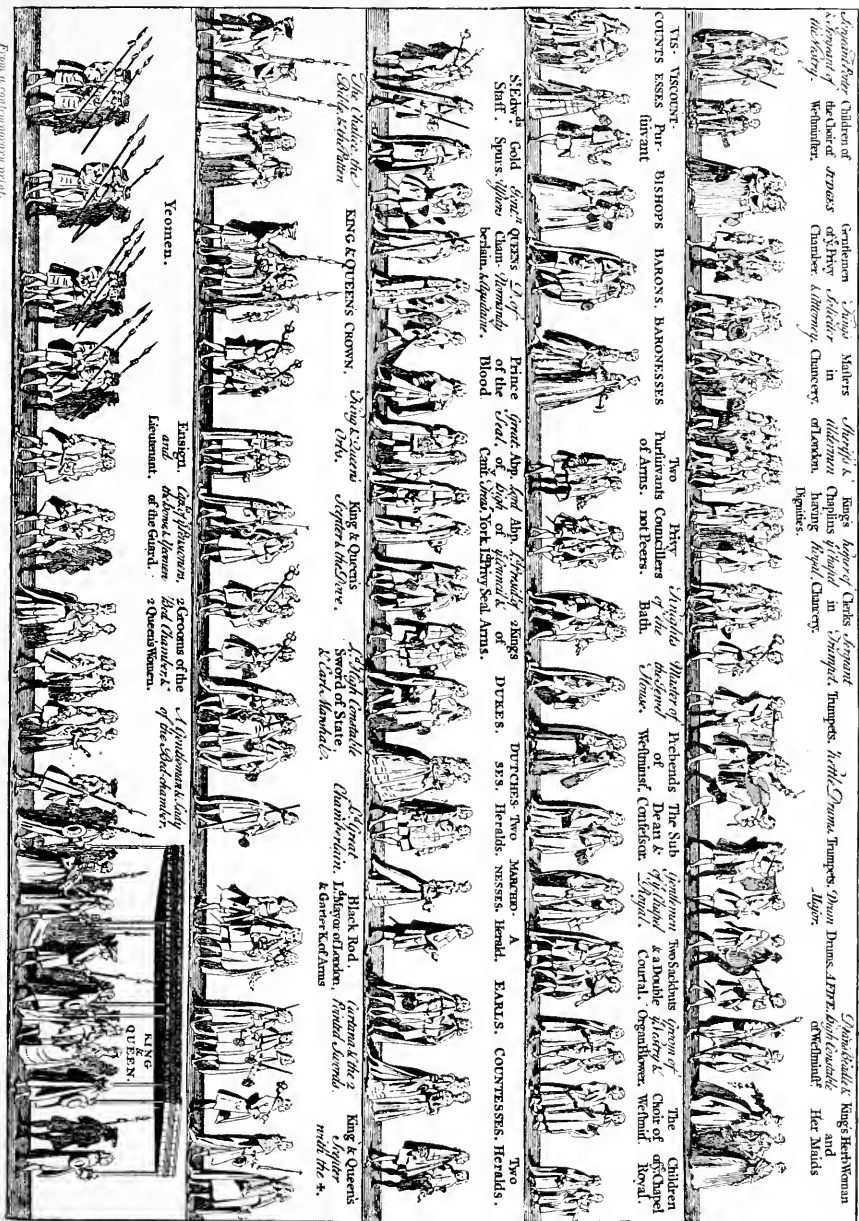
THE CORONATION CEREMONY IN WESTMINSTER HALL—JAMES II.

"Shewing how the King and Queen, with the nobility and others, did sit at dinner on the day of the coronation, April 27th, 1685. With the manner of serving up the first course of hot meat to their Majesties' table."

Henry IV.'s coronation was conducted on a scale of unexampled grandeur. Froissart, who gives a most minute account of the ceremony, states that he was accompanied to Westminster from the Tower by a cavalcade of 6,000 horse, "including his own immediate attendants and the City companies in their respective liveries." The streets were profusely decorated, and "there were nine fountains continually flowing with red and white wine, independently of another fountain in the Palace court, giving issue to similar liquids from various mouths." The banquet in Westminster Hall was in keeping with these arrangements. As a manuscript preserved in the British Museum shows, the fare was profuse to the point of repletion. In the first course, in addition to several dishes of mysterious composition, there were boar's head, swans, capons, pheasants, herons, sturgeons, and one of those "subtleties" in which the ancient cook so greatly delighted. The second course introduced "venison in frumenty," jelly, young pigs stuffed, peacocks, cranes, venison pasty, tongue, bittern, "fowls gilded," large tarts, rashers of ham or brawn, and another "subtlety." In the last course the guests had served for their delectation quinces in confection, young eagles, curlews, partridges, pigeons, quails, snipe, small birds, rabbits, white brawn sliced, eggs in jelly, fritters, sweetmeats, eggs, and finally a "subtlety." It was a princely feast, indeed, and one to appeal to the most fastidious of appetites as well as to the most robust. A strong contrast to the viands supplied on this occasion is afforded by the *menue* for the coronation banquet of Queen Katherine, Consort of Henry V., on February 24th, 1421. Owing to the fact that the season was Lent, the dishes were all fish. Fabian, the chronicler, who gives a detailed description of the banquet, says that in the first course was "a sotyltie called a pellycan, syttyng on her nest with her byrdes, and an image of St. Katherine holding a booke and dysputyng with the doctours." Other dishes in the subsequent two courses included, besides carp, turbot, tench, and perch, "porpies (porpoise) rostyd" and "mennys (minnows) fryed." Last, there was "a marchpane garnysshed with diuers figures of angellys, amonge the whiche was set an image of Seynt Katherine." The feast, according to all accounts, was a great success, unlike that which accompanied the coronation of Richard III. and his Consort, Anne, on July 6th, 1483. The third course of this, we are told, "was so late that there myght no servyce be served sayving wafers and hipocrace." Subsequent banquets of the Tudor period partook of much the same character as those already described. The coronation of Henry VIII., however, was distinguished by unusual splendour. An old writer gives a vivid picture of the progress through the streets to Westminster, with Katherine of Aragon borne on a litter, with two white palfreys "apparellled in white satyn embroidered, her heire hanging downe to her back of a very great length, bewtefull and goodly to behold, and on her head a coronate set with many rich orient stones." Jousts and tourneys were arranged within the Palace precincts, and in order that the King and Queen could the better witness them, "was framed a fair house covered with tapestry and hanged with rich cloths of arras." Another characteristic feature of the pageant was "a curious fountain, and over it a castle; on the top thereof a great crown imperial, all the embatling being with roses and pomegranates gilded. . . . And out of several places of the same



HERB WOMEN IN THE CORONATION PROCESSION OF JAMES II.  
These Ladies headed the *cortege*, and strewed sweet herbs in the monarch's path.





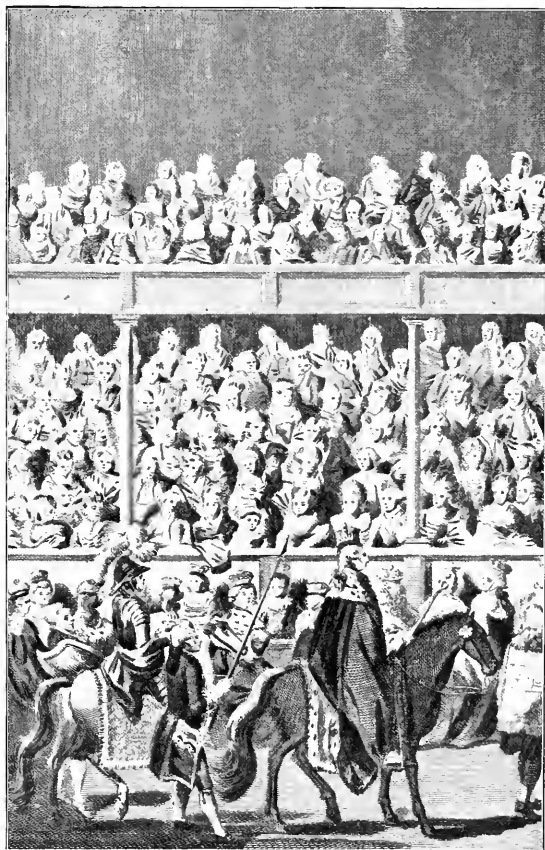
TRIUMPHAL ARCH ERECTED IN WESTMINSTER HALL FOR THE CORONATION OF GEORGE II.

instruments sweetly sounding." The river procession, of which this was an example, was a popular feature of the pageantry of this period. When Elizabeth, in accordance with custom, before her coronation proceeded to the Tower to prepare for the ceremony, she followed the river route. Embarking on January 12th, 1559, at the Royal stairs by the Palace side, she was escorted by the Lord Mayor and the City companies in their handsome barges to the stern old fortress. Great were the rejoicings which accompanied her progress, but this Water Triumph, as it was termed, was insignificant compared with the grand pageant called the City Triumph, which marked her return, two days later, to Westminster. In her train were included the flower of the nobility, and the streets, decked with lavish hand, were filled with substantial citizens. As she passed along Cheapside she was presented with a Bible, which she pressed to her heart in a pious fervour which gave immense satisfaction to her people, who saw in the act an indication that the Reformed Faith would receive justice at her hands. The subsequent ceremonies in Westminster Hall were accompanied by all the time-honoured adjuncts, not omitting the Champion's challenge and the presentation by the Lord Mayor of hyppocras and spiced wine in a gold cup, which afterwards became his property.

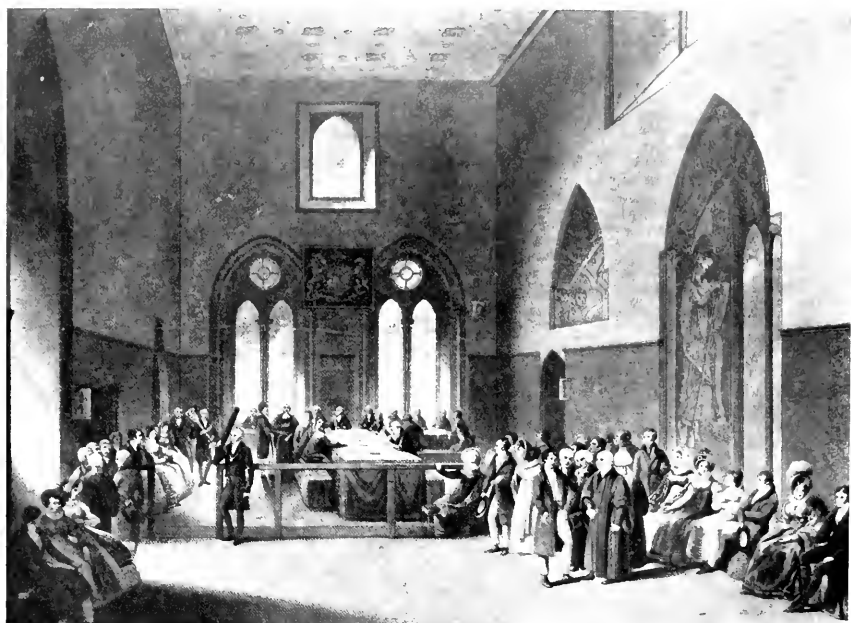
With the gradual decay of the Palace of Westminster, the coronation functions were divested of some of their less important features. But the change was not sufficiently great to have any marked effect on the ceremony. As heretofore, the King on the day of his coronation went in procession from the Palace to the Abbey, and continued to return thither immediately after the ceremony to preside at the banquet in Westminster Hall, at which the purely secular portions of the celebration were enacted. Of the later Stuart coronations a complete picture has been left us in the works of Ashmole and Sandford, "those learned Heralds," as they were termed by a writer of a somewhat later day. The description of the ceremony which distinguished Charles II.'s accession is minute to the point of tediousness. From it we gather that at seven o'clock upon the morning of the ceremony (St. George's Day) "the King entered into his rich barge, took water from the Priory Stairs at Whitehall, and landed

castle on the several days of the coronation, jousts, and tourneys, out of the mouths of certain beasts or garglets did run red, white, and claret wine." In short, as Arthur Taylor in his "Glory of Regality" observes, the display was "worthy of the golden age of pageants." Practically the same gorgeous arrangements were made on the occasion of the coronation of the unfortunate Anne Boleyn, whom the King made it a special point to honour. It is recorded that during the banquet the King, with various ambassadors, stood to observe the service in a "little closet" constructed "out of the Clozotes of St. Stephen's." Poor Anne! Not many years later she was a victim to the savagery of her tyrant husband on the scaffold, and subsequently, on February 4th, 1540, Anne of Cleves, her successor in the fickle affections of the King, was being taken with much state from Greenwich to Westminster by water, accompanied by "the Lord Mayor and his brethren, with twelve of the chiefe companies of the citie, all in barges, gorgeously garnished, with banners, penons, and targets, richlie covered, and furnished with

at the Parliament Stairs, from whence he proceeded up to the room behind the Lords' House called the Prince's lodgings, where, after he had reposed himself for a while, he was arrayed in his Royal robes of crimson, velvet, furred with ermine, by which time the nobility being assembled, robed themselves in the Lords' House and the Painted Chamber." All being in readiness, and "the nobility having been called over in the Painted Chamber," a move was made to Westminster Hall, where at the western end his Majesty was "set in his chair under a rich cloth of state." Thereafter "Sir Gilbert Talbot, the Master of the Jewel House, presented the sword of state, as also the sword called *cartana*, and two other swords, to the Lord High Constable, who took and delivered them to the Lord High Chamberlain, and he, having drawn the last, laid them upon the table before the King." This was followed by the presentation of the regalia by the clergy of the Abbey, headed by the Dean, as a preliminary to the procession through New Palace Yard and King Street to the west door of the Abbey. The religious ceremony completed there was a return in state to the Hall for the banquet. The first course was ushered in by a gorgeous procession, in which the Lord High Steward, the Earl Marshal, and the Lord High Constable, all on horseback, "in their robes and having their coronets on their heads," figured conspicuously. When dinner was on the table—rather cold, one would suppose, after so much ceremony—"the King came forth from the Inner Court of Wards in his Royal robes, with the crown on his head and scepter in his hand, having the three swords borne naked before him." Soon after he had taken his seat "the Lord Allington carried to the King his first draught of drink in a silver gilt cup, being assisted by the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, Viscount Montague, and the Lord Paget, his assistants." Next appeared on the scene "Thomas Leigh, Esq., with a mess of pottage called *dellegrout*; this service being adjudged unto him by the aforesaid Court of Claims, in right of the manor of Addington, in Surrey; whereupon the Lord High Chamberlain presented him to the King, who accepted his service, but did not eat thereof." And so the banquet proceeded to the close of the second course, amid a mass of ceremonial which must have been quite destructive of the Royal appetite. "By this time,



THE CORONATION OF GEORGE III.  
The Champion preparing to deliver his challenge.



THE COURT OF CLAIMS.

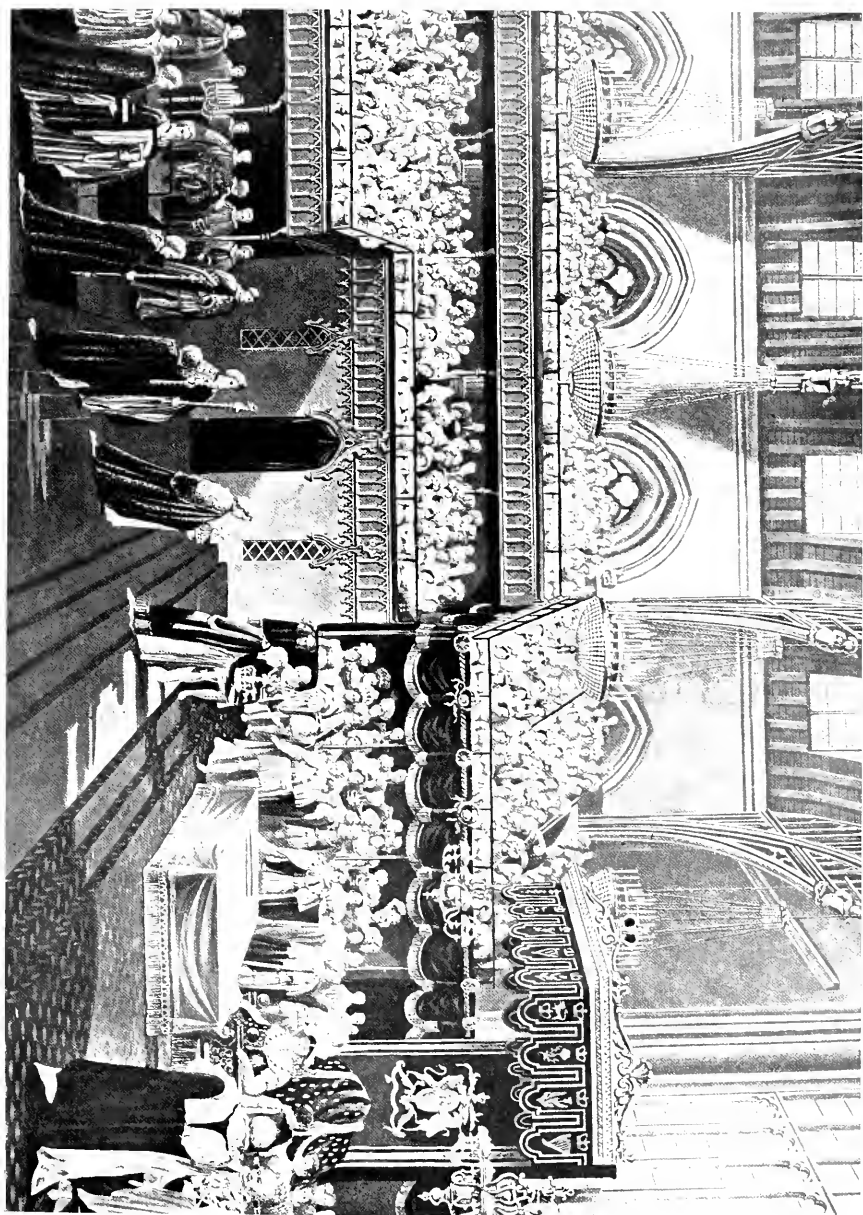
A sitting in the Painted Chamber of the tribunal which settled the respective rights to serve the Sovereign at the coronation.

the day being pretty far spent, the King, having water brought him by the Earl of Pembroke and his assistants, washed and rose from dinner, and retiring into the Inner Court of Wards, and having disrobed, went privately to his barge and so to Whitehall, where he landed."

It would seem rather curious that the King should have quitted the banquetting hall before the serving of the third and final course if we did not know from Sandford's painstaking researches that special provision was made for the Royal table. A minute of Council issued prior to the coronation sets forth that there "be provided for his Majesty in the nature of an ambigue; but with two courses, in regard to the ceremonies that are to be performed at the second course." The nature of an "ambigue" is best explained by the following quatrain quoted by Johnson from an old work on the art of cookery:

When straitened in your time, and servants few,  
Ye'd richly then compose an ambigue,  
Where first and second course, and your desert,  
All in one single table have their part.

The arrangement was, no doubt, convenient, but we cannot imagine a Sovereign in these days having a special meal to himself, and deserting the festive board in the middle of the banquet. Something, however, must be allowed for human weakness. The coronation ceremonies were fatiguing to the point of exhaustion. It is recorded of one Sovereign that he was so worn out before the proceedings had half concluded that he had to retire to his apartments for rest. Possibly it may have been this cause which led to the incident familiarly associated with the crowning of James II. Returning to the Palace after the service in the Abbey, the crown tottered on his head, and would have fallen off had not the Hon. Henry Sidney rushed to the rescue. He is reported to have said as he held the dazzling circlet: "This is not the first



PROMISSION OF THE REGALIA AT THE CORONATION OF GEORGE IV.  
One of the most interesting features of the coronation ceremonies in Westminster Hall.



GEORGE IV. IN HIS CORONATION ROBES.

The enormous weight of the robes greatly inconvenienced the King during the coronation ceremony.

time our family have supported the Crown," a grim piece of pleasantry which James could hardly have relished.

James II.'s coronation was arranged on a scheme of exceptional splendour, and it found so much favour that it formed the model for subsequent coronations up to, and including, that of George II. and his Consort, Queen Caroline. One feature to be noted in the procession from the Hall to the Abbey was the presence of "the Strewer of Flowers in Ordinary to his Majesty," who, assisted by six "herb women," strewed sweet herbs and flowers from baskets they carried in the way of the Sovereign as he walked the six hundred yards or more which was the length of the conventional coronation course. A versified description of the coronation of George II. and Caroline, recited by the boys of the Westminster School, gives some interesting glimpses of the pageant. First, we have the eagerness of anticipation:—

Clloe, impatient for th' approaching sight,  
For once vouchsafes to rise by candlelight.  
Glass, combs, and essences in order stand,  
Maid, sempstress, lacquey, wait her wide command.  
Swift fly the hours: and scarce by op'ning morn  
An hundred hands the finish'd fair adorn.  
Sleep on secure, when this day's toil is done;  
And boast that once you've seen the rising sun.  
Happy that now you ne'er will want a theme  
To talk of waking, and when sleeping dream.

Then comes the realisation:—

First in procession of the pompous day,  
With fragrant flow'rs a matron marks the way;  
Next trumpets, kettledrums, and various band,  
Too hard, too many in a verse to stand;  
Then peers, earls, dukes, their different lights display,  
And last both Majesties—meridian day!  
To small beginnings what great things we owe,  
Since one old woman opens such a show.

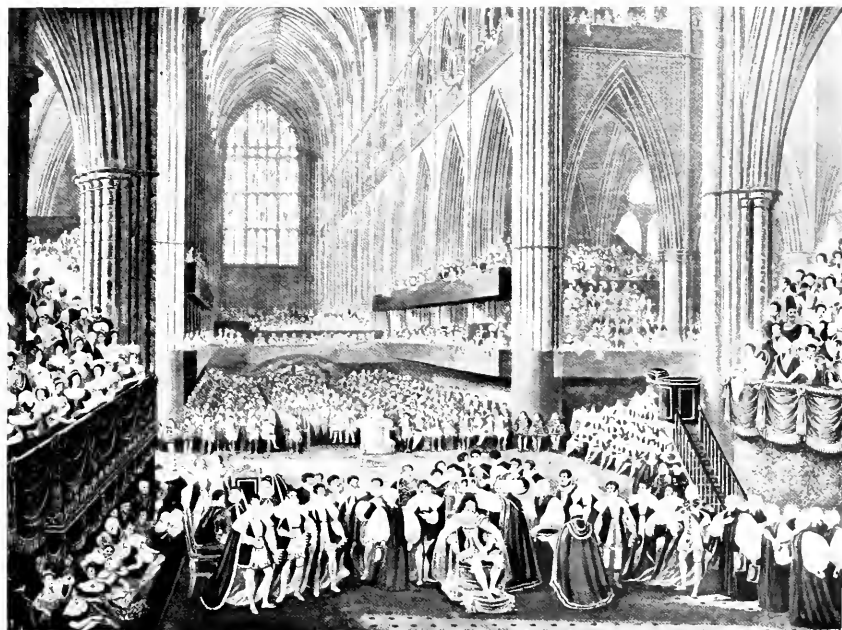


The herb woman is not the only figure in the procession which attracts the curious notice of the youthful spectators:—

Behold the man in solemn state,  
Whose scarlet mantle shows him great!  
Of what new order can he be?  
The King's First Organ Blower he!  
Oh! could I but thy praises sing,  
First Organ Blower to the King!  
The masters of the tuneful trade  
Must own thy necessary aid;  
Thou in their harmony may'st claim  
At least an equal share of fame;  
Mute without thee the organ's found;  
Theirs are the notes but thine the sound.

To the banquet in the Hall several verses are devoted. They may be quoted, as they indicate the character of the changes necessitated by the function in the ordinary uses of the Hall:—

When Rufus finish'd saw his Hall, he said  
Twas scarce sufficient for a Royal bed.  
When George and Carline with their shining train  
Enter that roof, we may once more complain,  
And in regret with honest Rufus join:  
The Hall's too little for the guests to dine.



THE CORONATION OF GEORGE IV. IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

The view shows the ceremony at the point where the King is actually crowned.

Many expedients, in fact, had to be adopted to squeeze the company in:—

To admit the guests the Hall expands its floor,  
Each court removed, and even the Alma Cur;<sup>1</sup>  
For here both law and equity agree  
And issue join upon one Common Plea,  
That naught be seen this day but harmony,  
Blest concord! hold but till the term's near spent,  
'Twould turn the lawyers' Christmas into Lent.

Here we must take leave of this lively record. It is not great, even as schoolboy's doggerel, but it is interesting as a contemporary picture of the coronation, as well as an indication of the close association between the School and the Palace—an association which to this day is marked by the admission of certain of the Westminster scholars to the public gallery of the House of Commons without the customary formality of obtaining an order.



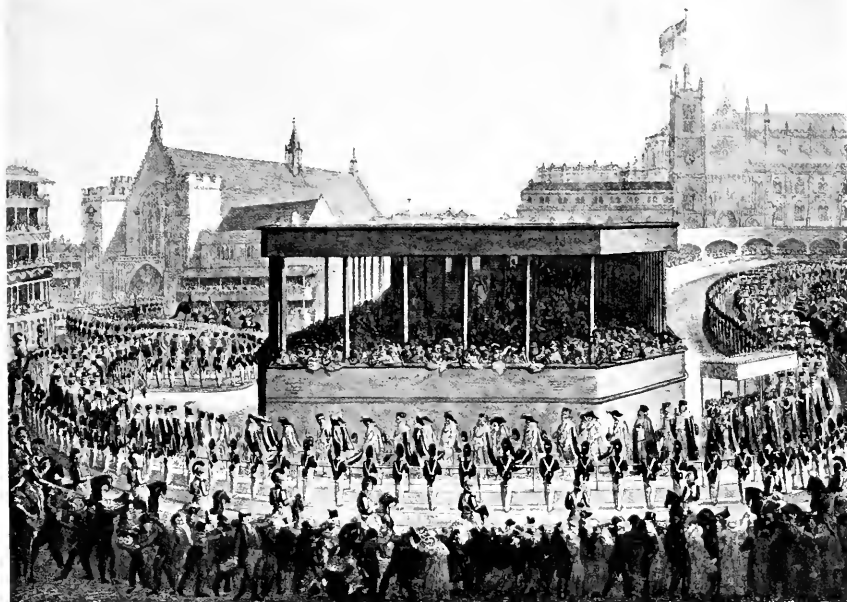
THE CROWN OF GEORGE IV.

The coronation of George III. and his Queen in 1764 followed in all respects the familiar lines, but it was distinguished by an incident which created some stir at the time. When the Champion delivered his challenge in Westminster Hall, and the gambit was thrown on the ground (so the story runs, a lady's glove, apparently cast from some of the upper benches, fluttered to the flags by the side of it. No one was able to detect the owner, and subsequent inquiry was not more successful in unravelling the mystery. Soon, however, a rumour got into circulation that the glove had been thrown by the Young Pretender, who had penetrated to the Hall disguised in female attire, out of a romantic desire to participate in the ceremony—probably an idle invention, so far, at least, as the glove-throwing is concerned. But there is no doubt that it was widely believed at the time that the young Jacobite Prince was actually a spectator of the proceedings. This is shown by a statement

which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1764, to the effect that it was “publicly said that the Young Pretender himself came from Flanders to see the coronation; that he was in Westminster Hall during the ceremony, and in London two or three days before and after it, under the name of Mr. Brown.”

A further and more direct reference to the subject is contained in the following passage of a letter written by Mr. Hume to one of his literary friends: “What will surprise you more, the Lord Marshal, a few days after the coronation of the present King, told me that he believed that the Young Pretender was at that time in London, or, at least, had been so very lately, and had come over to see the show of the coronation, and had actually seen it. I asked my lord the reason for this strange fact. ‘Why,’ says he, ‘a gentleman told me so who saw him there, and whispered in his ear—“Your Royal Highness is the last of all mortals whom I should expect to see here.” “It was curiosity that led me,” said the other, “but I assure you,” added he, “that the person who is the cause of all this pomp and magnificence is the man I envy the least.”’” True or false, the story has been cited by coronation writers as the solitary instance in which the Champion's challenge ever met with a response of any kind.

<sup>1</sup> The Courts of Chancery, the King's Bench, and the Common Pleas, which then stood within the limits of the Hall.



THE CORONATION PROCESSION OF GEORGE IV. FROM THE ABBEY TO WESTMINSTER HALL.  
The route followed was from the west door of the Abbey to the great door of Westminster Hall.

As the last of a long line of coronations with full honours, that of George IV. demands particular notice. An immense sum of public money was spent upon the ceremony, and no effort was spared to promote its success as a spectacle. The arrangements in Westminster Hall were on an exceptionally elaborate scale. At the western end was the throne, with a gorgeous canopy embellished with a wealth of gold. The background was of crimson velvet, with the Royal arms embroidered on it. In front was the Royal table, coloured purple with a rim of gold, and an interior square moulding also of gold. From the roof were suspended by gilt chains massive cut-glass lustres with broad ornamental frames, containing three circles of wax candles. Scarlet-covered galleries rose from the floor on either side of the Hall, and at the upper end of the building were boxes for the Royal Family and the Foreign ministers, resplendent in gilding. It was all very magnificent, but it did not seem to harmonise with the permanent features of the Hall—the time-stained roof-tree and the grey walls. The actual ceremony was, in some respects, even less in keeping with the place. Although well-known prize-fighters were engaged to keep the peace, the utmost disorder prevailed. Before the King appeared on the scene there were squabbles for places, ending in one instance almost in a free fight. Even after his Majesty arrived there was much difficulty in maintaining a semblance of order.

It is probable that the efforts made by Queen Caroline, the King's ill-used Consort, to secure a place in the pageant had a demoralising effect upon the arrangements. The question of the Queen's right to participate in the coronation ceremonies had been the subject of formal proceedings before the Privy Council, and it had been decided that the Queen was not entitled as of right to be crowned at the same time as her husband. But, undeterred by this adverse ruling, Caroline determined to make an effort to be present at the ceremony. Early on the coronation day the Queen, accompanied by Lord Hood, arrived in her carriage, near

the New Palace Yard, amid the plaudits of the mob. At the Poets' Corner entrance of the Abbey Lord Hood, on her Majesty's behalf, demanded admission. The attendant, however, firmly but respectfully declined to let her pass without the requisite authorisation. "Did you ever hear of a Queen being asked for a ticket before?" inquired Lord Hood. The doorkeeper replied that his orders were general, and without any exceptions. "I present to you your Queen," persisted the peer. "Do you refuse her admission?" The attendant was not to be moved. His orders were peremptory, and, reluctant as he might be to discharge his duty, he could not allow the Queen to pass without a ticket. Lord Hood now produced a ticket for one, and a colloquy ensued as to whether the Queen should use it. Ultimately she decided not to enter the Abbey alone. Then ensued a curious scene, described by an eye-witness: "As she turned round to quit the spot, some persons in the doorway burst into a vulgar laugh of derision. Her Majesty looked at them contemptuously; and Lord Hood observed that in such a place he expected to have met decorous conduct, at least, towards a Sovereign — instead of that she had been denied her indubitable right, and been treated not only in an ill-mannered, but in an unmanly way. Her Majesty then turned about and passed through a group of fashionable women who were going to the Abbey with tickets, but who did not take the slightest notice of her. On her entering her carriage there was considerable disapprobation, mingled with cries of 'Shame! Shame!' 'Off! Off!' but the other parts of the populace repeated the cries of 'The Queen! The Queen!' with great enthusiasm."

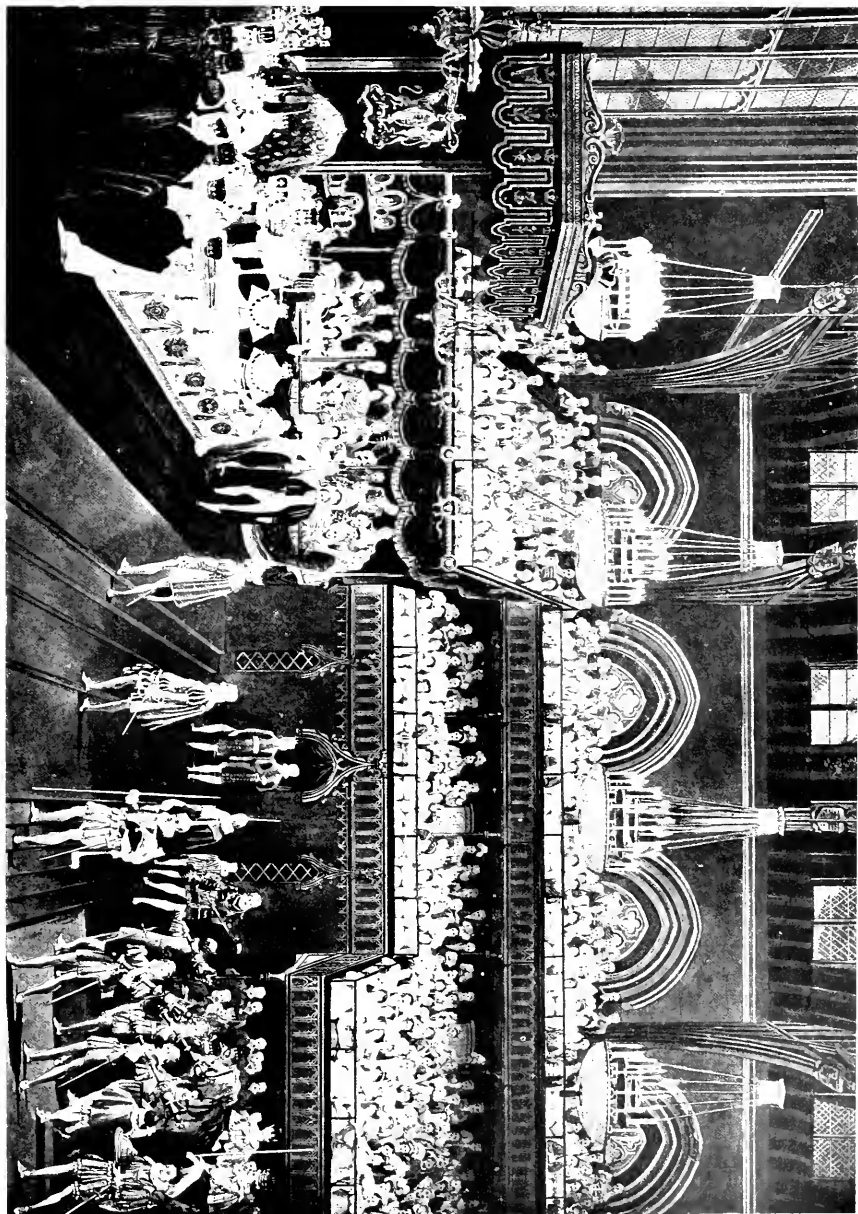


MISS FELLOWES,

A herb woman in the coronation procession of George IV.

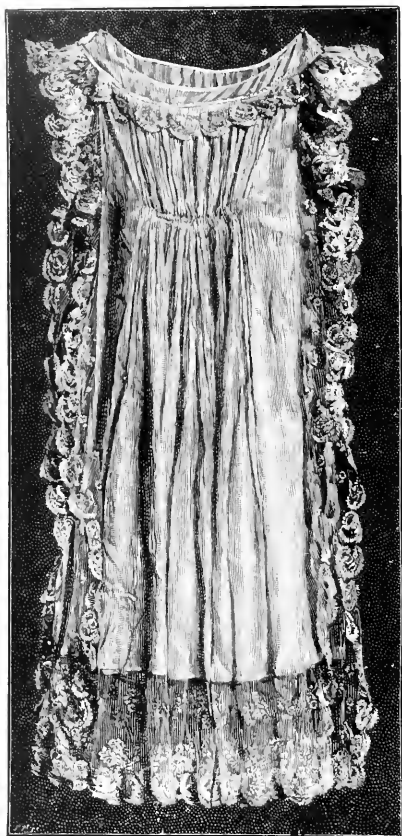
QUEEN CAROLINE  
Consort of George IV.

A more degrading and humiliating episode had never been experienced at a coronation, and the King would have been less than human if it had not produced some effect upon him. Throughout the subsequent ceremony he showed himself ill at ease. A spectator who witnessed the ceremony thus pictures him: "Precisely at ten o'clock the King entered the hall from the door behind the throne, habited in robes of enormous size and richness, wearing a black hat with a monstrous plume of ostrich feathers, out of the midst of which rose a black heron's plume. His Majesty seemed much oppressed with the weight of his robes. The train was of enormous length and breadth; it was of crimson velvet, adorned with large golden stars and a broad golden border. His Majesty frequently wiped his face while he remained seated. In descending the steps of the platform he seemed very feeble, and requested the aid of an officer who was near him. Instead of standing under the canopy, his Majesty, perhaps afraid of the awkwardness of the barons, preceded it. The canopy was, therefore, always borne after him. When he had got a little way down the Hall, he



THE FORMATION OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN WESTMINSTER HALL.

The Members paying homage after the delivery of the challenge.



*By permission of the Royal Archaeological Institute.*

THE ALB USED BY QUEEN VICTORIA AT HER  
CORONATION.

turned to his train-bearers and requested them to bear his train farther from him, apparently with a view to release himself from the weight."

The arrangements for the banquet do not appear to have been altogether happy. Some two thousand candles had been employed in the lighting of the Hall, and the heat from these was tremendous. Nor was this the only inconvenience, "for occasionally large pieces of melted wax fell without distinction of persons upon all within reach." In the circumstances it is only natural that great havoc was played with the curls of many of the ladies, whose hair "had lost all traces of the friseur's skill long before the ceremony of the day was concluded." There was a singular lack of order about the proceedings. After the King's return from the Abbey, and while he was divesting himself of his robes in his private apartment, the ladies and gentlemen from the galleries promenaded up and down between the tables and helped themselves to the dishes so bountifully provided. Further disorder was caused by the action of some of the City aldermen, who as soon as they entered the Hall walked over to one of the tables, leaving several behind who ought to have preceded them. The mistake was corrected, to the amusement of the other guests, because, says the voracious writer previously quoted, "of the well-known attachment of the worthy aldermen to the enjoyment of the table." These premature attacks upon the viands could scarcely have served to appreciably diminish them, for the supply was on the most lavish scale. The following particulars of the quantities furnished were published at the time:—

#### HOT DISHES.

160 treacens of soup: 80 of turtle, 40 of rice, and 40 vermicelli.

160 dishes of fish: comprising 80 of turbot, 40 of trout, 40 of salmon.

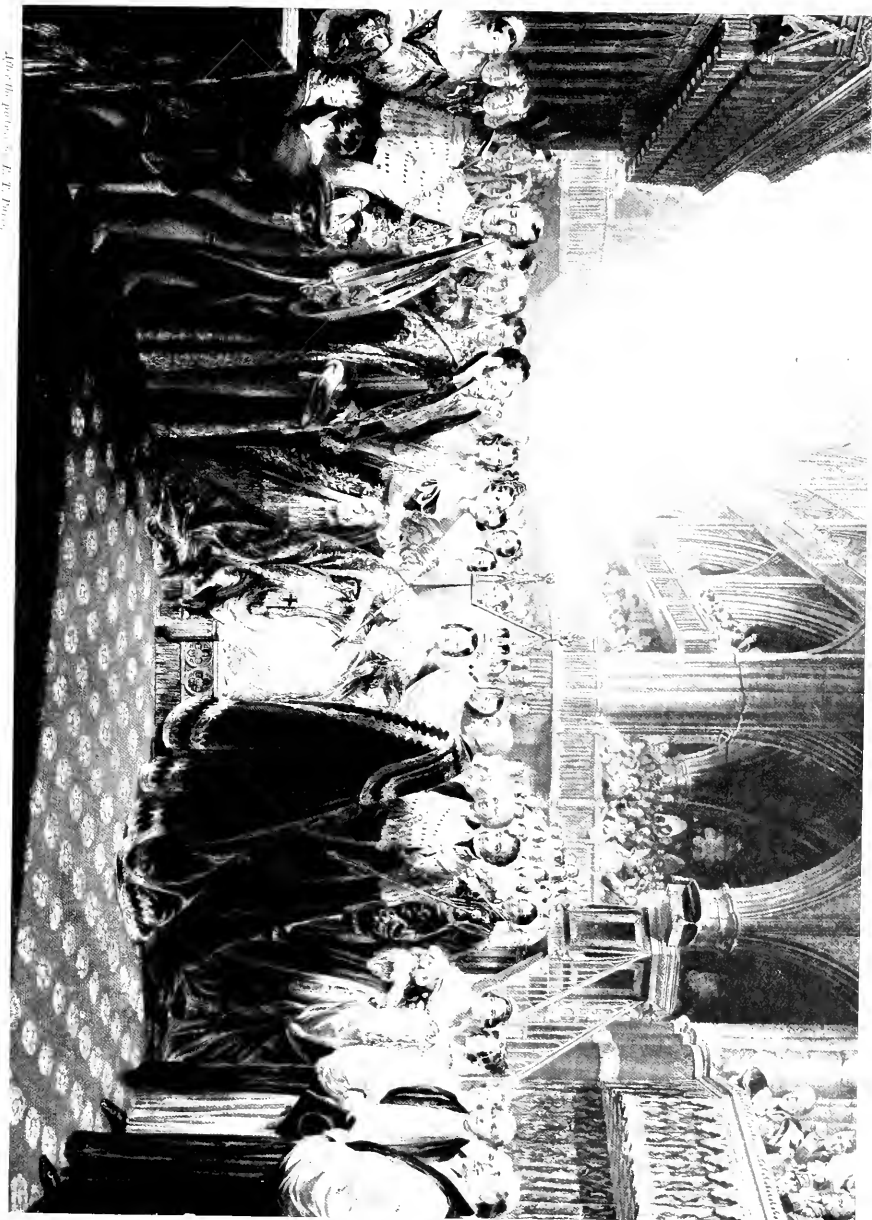
160 hot joints: including 80 of venison, 40 of roast beef, with three barons, 40 of mutton and veal.

160 dishes of vegetables: including potatoes, peas, and cauliflowers.

480 sauce boats: 240 of lobsters, 120 butter, 120 mint.

#### COLD DISHES.

80 dishes of braised ham: 80 savoury pies: 80 dishes of dambled geese, two in each: 80 dishes of savoury cakes: 80 pieces of beef, braised: 80 dishes of capons, braised, two in each: 1,190 side dishes of various sorts: 320 dishes of mounted pastry: 320 dishes of small pastry: 400 dishes of jellies and creams: 160 dishes of shell fish, 80 of lobster and 80 of cray-fish: 160 dishes of cold roast fowls: 80 dishes of cold house lamb.



*Joseph Wilson & Co. T. Jones*

THE CORONATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA IN WESTMINSTER HALL.



*In possession of the Royal Archaeological Institute.*

QUEEN VICTORIA'S CORONATION TUNIC AND STOLE.

#### TOTAL QUANTITIES.

7,742 lbs. of beef; 7,133 lbs. of veal; 2,474 lbs. of mutton; 20 quarters of house lamb; 5 saddles of lamb; 55 quarters of grass lamb; 160 lambs' sweet-breads; 389 cow heels; 400 calves' feet; 250 lbs. of suet; 160 geese; 720 pullets and capons; 1,610 chickens; 520 fowls for stock; 1,730 lbs. of bacon; 550 lbs. of lard; 912 lbs. of butter; 8,400 eggs.

A gargantuan feast, truly! Needless to say, the crumbs that remained after the diners had satisfied their appetites were very substantial. If the old custom had been followed these fragments would have been left for the crowd to scramble for after the banquet, but in this instance they were handed over to the poor of St. Margaret's, in order to avoid the disgraceful scenes which at other coronations had succeeded the banquet. The forethought shown in this respect, however, did not prevent an extensive appropriation — or misappropriation — of substantial objects. What followed the retirement of the King is thus graphically described: "For a few seconds delicacy, or a disinclination to be the first to commence the scene of plunder, suspended the projected attack, but at last a rude hand having been thrust through the first ranks, and a golden fork having

been seized, this operated as a signal to all, and was followed by a general snatch. In a short time all the small portable articles were transferred to the pockets of the multitude. The Lord Great Chamberlain, being alarmed by the confusion, returned to the Hall, and by the greatest personal exertion succeeded in preventing the extension of the supposed 'licensed plunder' to the more costly parts of the coronation plate. With great difficulty all the remaining part of the plate was removed to Cotton Garden, and all the apprehensions on this score having subsided, the marauders were left to the undisturbed possession of their coronation privileges in the body of the Hall, and thither they turned their attentions." The scene which ensued here was extraordinary. "A raging thirst was the first want to be satisfied, and in a very few moments every bottle on the board was emptied of its contents. A fresh supply was, however, soon obtained from the cellars, and all reasonable calls of this sort were complied with. While some were thus occupied, others still pursued the work of plunder. Arms were everywhere seen stretched forth breaking and destroying the table ornaments, which were of themselves too cumbersome to remove, for the purpose of obtaining some trophy commemorative of the occasion; thus baskets, flower-pots, vases, and figures were everywhere disappearing, and those were followed by glasses, knives and forks, saltspoons, and, finally, the plates and dishes. These last were of pewter, and engraved with the Royal arms and the letters 'Geo. IV.' and were, therefore, greatly coveted. The dirty state of these articles, however, added to the inconsistency of their appearance with full Court dresses,



deterred many from appropriating them to their own use, although some, laying aside all delicacies of this sort, did not fail to take out their handkerchiefs and, amidst their folds, to conceal their much-prized spoils."

When the Hall had been thoroughly looted, every one was anxious to get away from the Palace, but the crowded nature of the streets made the bringing up of the carriages a slow process. Exhausted with the fatigues of the day, and perhaps overcome by more subtle influences, the company threw themselves down indiscriminately in the rooms of the Palace—"peers and peeresses, judges and privy councillors, knights of all orders, and commoners of all degrees lay promiscuously, some on sofas, some on chairs, and a still greater number on the matted floors of the rooms and passages in which they happened to have sought refuge." In this position "many were overtaken with sleep, and scenes were presented extremely at variance with the splendid and dignified spectacle which had been but a few hours before exhibited in the presence of the Sovereign." Not until three o'clock in the morning had all the guests departed, and at that hour, we are told, "several of the ladies were so completely worn out that it became necessary to carry them to their carriages." Even then the difficulties of the Palace officials were not over. The populace, kept at a distance during the ceremony, had now been permitted to surround the Palace, and were clamouring menacingly at the gates for admission. Hurriedly the coronation plate—or such of it as had been left by the fashionable depredators—was carried to a place of safety, and one of the officials was sent to temporise with the mob. Fortunately, the crowd was amenable to reason. It remained passive while the official in question harangued it, and the arrival of

a strong force of military shortly afterwards removed all further cause of anxiety. Thus ended the last and most costly of the coronation feasts in Westminster Hall. Reviewing the scenes and incidents of the day, it is easy to understand why, when William IV. came to the throne a few years later, it should have been decided to abandon this portion of the time-honoured function. Nor does it appear remarkable that when Queen Victoria was crowned in 1838 there should have been wanting a disposition to revise the decision then come to. Nevertheless, it cannot but be regretted that this, perhaps the most attractive chapter in the history of the grand old Hall, should not have been completely written.



*By permission of the Royal Archaeological Institute.*

THE COPE OR IMPERIAL MANTLE WORN BY QUEEN VICTORIA AT HER CORONATION.

## CHAPTER XV.

### MEMORIES OF ST. STEPHEN'S (continued)—THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BEFORE the great Parliamentary era of the eighteenth century had passed away, with its inspiring traditions, there had appeared upon the floor of the House of Commons, in the person of George Canning, a new and promising candidate for the laurels of fame. Entering the House in 1793, as member for Newtown, in the Isle of Wight, after a brilliant career at Eton and Oxford, Canning had instantly attracted attention by the brilliancy of his talents. His speeches were not only marked by a great charm of style and natural eloquence, but were distinguished by an argumentative force and a grasp of facts exceedingly rare in one so young. A literary reputation dating back to his Eton days helped to strengthen the favour with which he was received. With uncommon rapidity for a novice devoid of family ties and influence, he worked his way to the very front rank of political aspirants of his day.

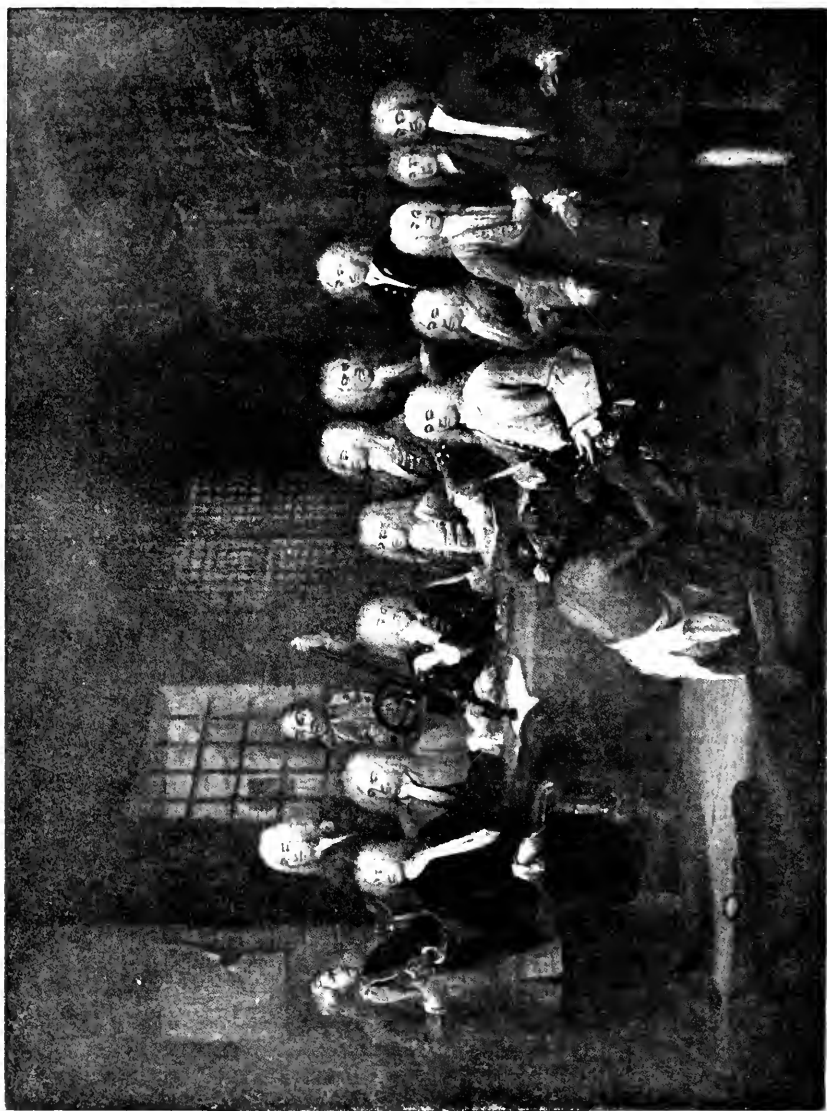


From the bust by Sir Francis Chantrey, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING.

He owed his entry into Parliament to Pitt, and his rapid rise was assisted by the encouragement and support of the great statesman, who showed a flattering confidence in his powers by selecting him, from a number of formidable competitors and rivals, for duties calling for the display of exceptional skill. That Minister's retirement in 1801 put a temporary check upon Canning's advancement. There now came into power the "Cabinet of Mediocrities" known as the Addington Ministry. With this group of respectable nonentities, the clever young politician had nothing in common. Soon he was engaged in pouring upon it the copious streams of his mordant satire. Sheridan took a hand in the game, and when Pitt himself returned to Westminster to strengthen the Opposition, the position of Ministers became insupportable. They resigned in 1803, and Pitt, impelled by the imperious necessities of the time, was called upon to form a Ministry. He attempted to arrange a coalition, of which Grenville and Fox, it was proposed, should be leading members; but the King's ineradicable aversion to Fox prevented the arrangement. In the end a new Administration was brought together, composed of most of the members of the discredited Government, with Pitt as Prime Minister. Pitt's death on January 23rd, 1805, put a period to its existence, but not



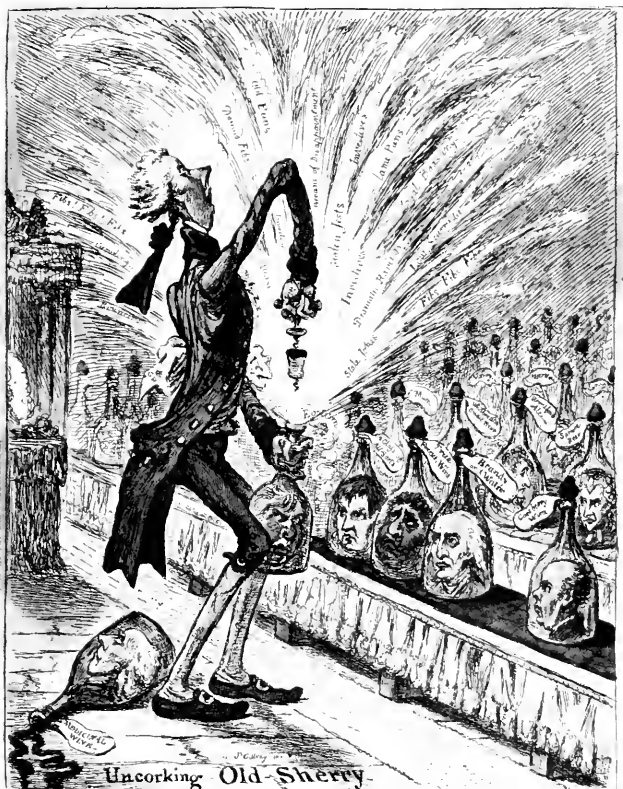


A COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AT THE FLEET PRISON

A reproduction of an episode in the lives of the members of the House of Commons, which is a subject of interest to the artist. The scene is set in the Fleet Prison, one of the most famous of the old London prisons.

before it had taken the first memorable step towards the abolition of the Slave Trade. Grenville and Fox were now associated, with the King's reluctant acquiescence, in forming a Government. It was a combination scarcely less fortunate than the Addington Administration. With the fatal facility which then obtained for coining damaging nicknames, the public, in allusion to the extremely varied elements which went to make up the ruling body, applied to it the description "The Ministry of All the Talents." Weak from the day of its formation, the Government was heavily shaken by the death of Fox on September 13th, 1806, and when, in 1807, it introduced a bill to relieve Roman Catholic and Dissenting officers from certain disabilities, in defiance of the King's strongly held views on Catholic emancipation, it courted the dismissal which awaited it at the Royal hands.

Now came Canning's opportunity. Marked out for high office by talents which shone with a greater lustre by reason of the dead level of commonplace to which the political forces of the time had been reduced by the successive removal of the great Parliamentary gladiators of the past era, he stepped, as it were by right, into one of the greatest positions in the new Ministry which was formed under the Duke of Portland's leadership on the dismissal of Grenville and his colleagues. The office entrusted to him was that of Foreign Secretary, a position of great honour and responsibility at all times, but rendered doubly important at this grave juncture in the affairs of the nation, when the continental outlook was black with the clouds of a coming storm. He played his part as the exponent of the Government's foreign policy, and as principal defender of their measures, with a zeal and an ability which delighted his friends. He was, in the words of one of his biographers, "the Ajax of the political host." Indomitable, resourceful, and indefatigable, he stood in the Parliamentary arena and faced the fierce attacks which were directed against the



A CARICATURE BY GILLRAY OF SHERIDAN,

Aimed at the statesman's habit of carefully elaborating impromptus, and firing them off at odd intervals.



From an engraving after the picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

#### THE DUKE OF PORTLAND.

The third duke, and a prominent statesman who twice filled the office of Prime Minister.

Vituperation only seemed to enhance the reputation of the statesman against whom it was directed. Steadily he increased his hold upon the House and the country, until an unfortunate incident rudely cut short his Ministerial career for a time. This was his quarrel with Castlereagh, culminating in the historic duel on Putney Heath. Canning's part in the affair was an entirely honourable one. Castlereagh's ground of offence against him was that he had acted treacherously towards him by promoting an intrigue for his removal from the position of War Secretary which he held in the Ministry; but there was no real justification for the charges of underhand dealing. What happened was that Canning, feeling that he could not work satisfactorily with Castlereagh, tendered his resignation to the head of the Ministry, and only withdrew it on the understanding that the latter should be removed to another department more suited to his talents. The responsibility for keeping the incident from Castlereagh rested with the Duke of Portland and the senior members of the Cabinet. They acted in common in the matter, and theirs was the duty of conveying to the War Secretary the decision come to. Probably they would have done so had not some mischief-maker divulged the transaction, representing Canning in an unfavourable light. A few words of explanation would easily have smoothed matters; but

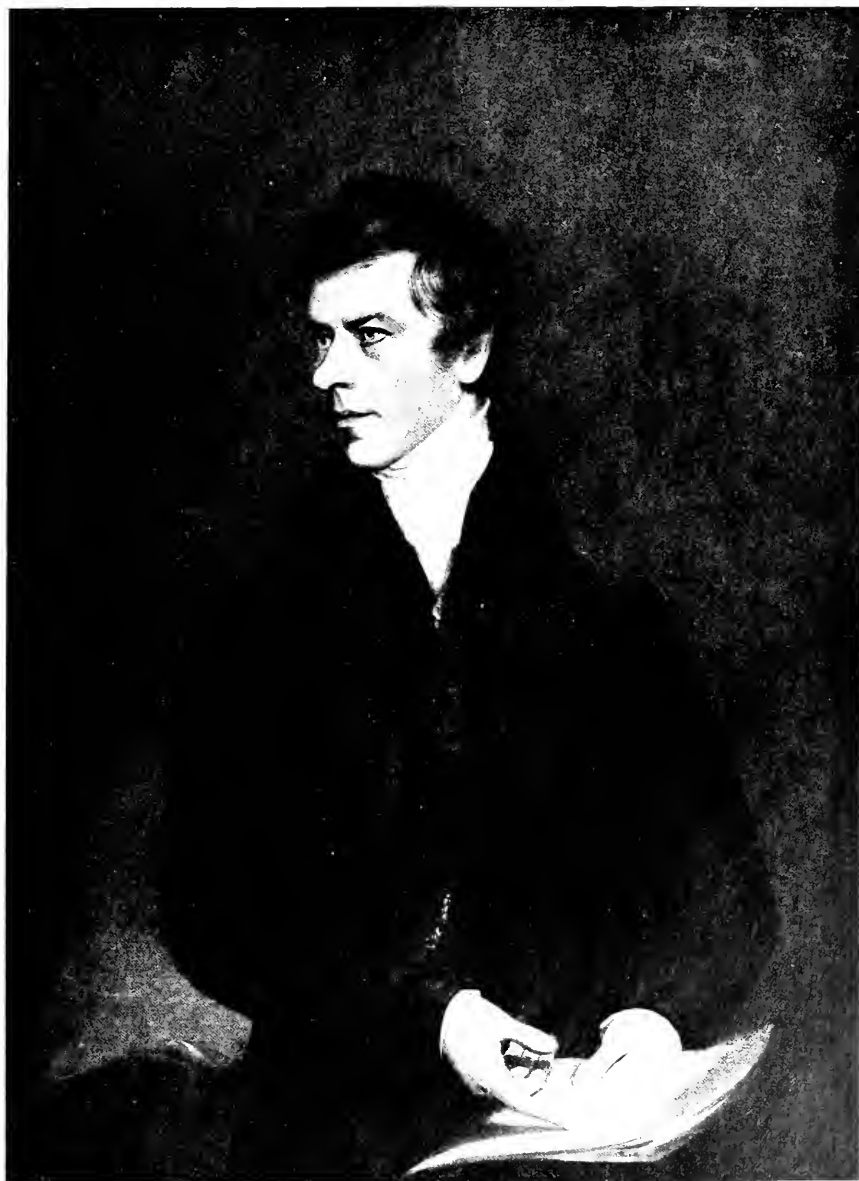
Administration. The test of his power was the vigour with which he was personally assailed by the Opposition writers. The Rev. Sydney Smith, in his "Letters of Peter Plymley," especially singled him out for his keen shafts of ridicule. Thus in his seventh letter the reverend wit says of him: "That he is an extraordinary writer of small poetry, and a droll wit of the highest lustre, I do most readily admit. After George Selwyn, and perhaps Tickell, there has been no such man for this half-century. The Foreign Secretary is a gentleman, a respectable as well as a highly agreeable man in private life; but you may as well feed me with decayed potatoes as console me for the miseries of Ireland by the resources of his *sense* and his *discretion*. It is only the public situation which this gentleman holds which entitles me, or induces me, to say so much about him. He is a fly in amber; nobody cares about the fly; the only question is, How the devil did it get there? Nor do I attack him from the love of glory, but from the love of utility, as a burgomaster hunts a rat in a Dutch dyke, for fear it should flood a province."



From a print published in 1808.

#### CANNING.

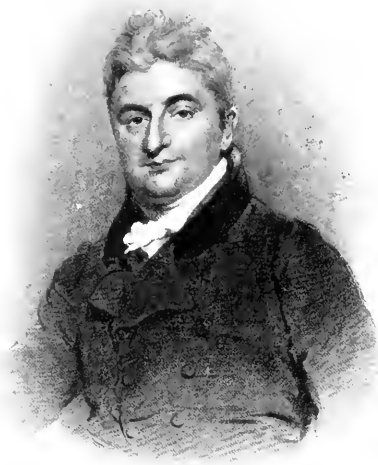
The eminent statesman as a young man.



*From the painting by J. Lawlands in the National Portrait Gallery.*

LORD BROUGHAM.

The celebrated statesman and jurist, who was a leading figure in the public life of the early half of the nineteenth century.



THE REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

Wit and political writer; a keen opponent of Canning and his policy.

satisfied after receiving satisfaction than before."

As a consequence of this unhappy occurrence, both Canning and Castlereagh retired from office, and very shortly afterwards the Ministry completely broke up. The new Government, of which Perceval was the head, was remarkable chiefly for the inclusion within its ranks of two young men destined to win renown upon the Parliamentary stage. These were Lord Palmerston, who in his twenty-fifth year became Secretary for War, and Robert Peel, who at twenty-three was called upon to fill the position of Under Secretary for the Colonies. For seven years Canning remained in the cold shades of Opposition. When he again took his seat on the Treasury Bench it was at the call of the Earl of Liverpool, in 1816, to discharge the duties of President of the Board of Control. He had been reconciled to Castlereagh some time previously, and had subjected himself to much criticism by accepting at his hands the post of Ambassador to Portugal, with an extravagant allowance. These attacks were revived now

when Castlereagh, with characteristic impetuosity, addressed an indignant letter charging him with duplicity and demanding satisfaction. Canning, in accordance with the code of honour of the time, felt that he had no alternative but to accept the challenge which was given. The meeting took place in early morning on September 21st, 1809, the Earl of Yarmouth acting as Castlereagh's second, and Mr. Ellis supporting Canning. Taking their ground, the antagonists fired and missed, and no explanation being given, they fired a second time, with the result that Canning was wounded in the thigh. Yet a further shot would have been delivered had not the seconds, seeing the blood flowing from Canning's wound, intervened. The parties separated with their animosity little, if at all, allayed—on Castlereagh's part, at all events. This circumstance was accounted for by Sheridan in his own delightful fashion. "Castlereagh," he observed, "is an Irishman even in his quarrels, for he was not a whit more



"A BOX OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE."

A caricature genially satirising Brougham's many-sided qualities.





*From a medallion after the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.*

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING.

A mature portrait of the famous statesman and orator, whose administration of foreign affairs constitutes a memorable epoch in political history.

that Canning had yet more directly subordinated himself to his old enemy. His reputation was certainly not enhanced by association with the blundering of the Liverpool Cabinet; and when Queen Caroline, to the great discomfiture of the Government, returned to England from Italy in 1820 to face her accusers, and the preliminary steps for her trial were taken, he availed himself of the opportunity of retirement. His withdrawal from active official work was not of long duration. In January, 1822, when about to start for India to take up the Governor-Generalship—a position many years later to be filled under memorable circumstances by his son—he was called upon, by the suicide of his old antagonist Castlereagh (then Marquis of Londonderry), to take over the Foreign Secretaryship. Almost at once he was plunged into the vortex of a fierce party strife over the question of Catholic emancipation. A bill brought in to relieve Roman Catholic peers from their disability to sit and vote in the House of Lords found in him an eloquent supporter, and it was carried by small majorities through the House of Commons, only, however, to be rejected by the Peers. It was considered by the friends of the Catholic party that Canning had not displayed that ardour on their behalf which, from his previously expressed opinions on the subject, they had a right to expect. As an outcome of this feeling a debate was raised in the House of Commons on April 17th, 1823, and the Minister was violently attacked. Then ensued one of those memorable "scenes" which are picturesque landmarks in Parliament's history. It came about in this fashion.

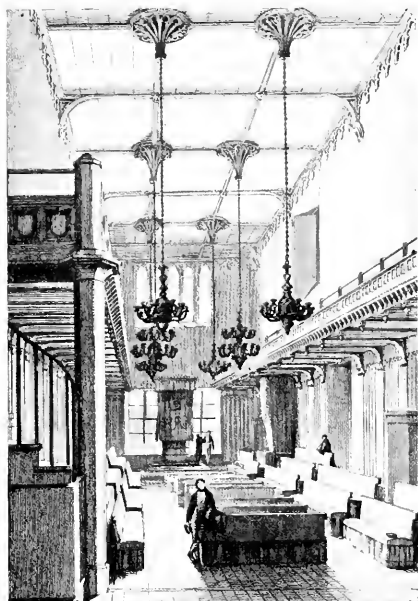
Brougham made a virulent speech, in the course of which, amid other flowers of rhetoric, he spoke of Canning as having "exhibited a most incredible specimen of the most monstrous truckling, for the purpose of obtaining office, that the whole history of political tergiversation could furnish."

Stung to the quick by this accusation of ignoble trimming—an accusation which was the more unbearable because it was so entirely unjust—Canning, in a white heat of anger, jumped to his feet and exclaimed, "That is false." The direct lie, given in any quarter in the House of Commons, is a startling thing; but when it comes from one of the highest Ministers of the Crown it is a grave breach of decorum indeed. A deep hush fell upon the House. At length the Speaker, slowly rising, said in a low tone he hoped the right honourable Secretary would retract the expression he had used. Such language, he said, was a complete violation of the customs and orders of the House, and he regretted that, even in haste, it should have been used. Canning expressed his sorrow at having infringed

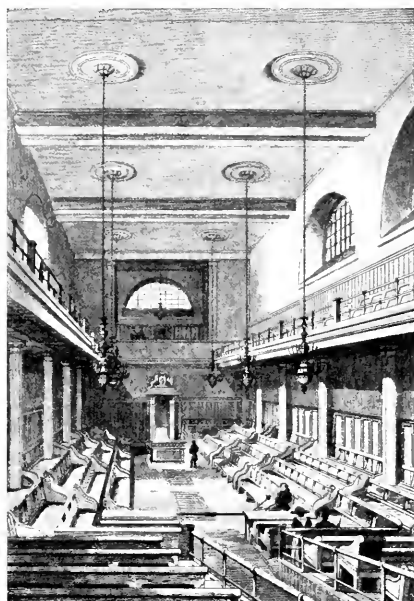


*From the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence in the National Portrait Gallery.*

THE MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY, BETTER KNOWN AS LORD CASTLEREAGH,  
At one time a bitter rival of Canning, with whom he fought a duel on Putney Heath.



THE HOUSE OF LORDS AS FITTED UP IN 1835 AFTER THE FIRE.



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AS FITTED UP IN 1835 AFTER THE FIRE.

the decencies of debate, but said that no consideration on earth should induce him to retract the sentiment. A prolonged and animated discussion ensued, leading to a motion that both Canning and Brougham should be committed to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. Brougham strongly opposed this, maintaining that he had committed no offence, and that to take such a step as that proposed would be a flagrant violation of the principles of justice. He found supporters for his view in various parts of the House, and Canning also had his champions. At length a happy way out of the *impasse* was found by the withdrawal of the motion, and by mutual explanations and a promise on the part of both statesmen "to think no more of it."

It is pleasant to turn from this undignified squabble, which reflected so little credit on either of the principal parties to it, to an episode some three years later in which Canning displayed all his finest qualities as a statesman and an orator. The occasion was a debate on the threatened aggression of Spain upon Portugal. In his capacity of Foreign Secretary Canning was called upon to elucidate the Ministerial policy. He did so in a speech which lives amongst the masterpieces of Parliamentary oratory. Time has divested the subject-matter of this splendid pronouncement of much of its interest for modern readers, but its singular grace of style, nobility of sentiment, and clearness of thought and expression give it still a charm for all who appreciate eloquence. One passage in the speech has become classic. It is that in which Canning, with the far-sightedness which was the chief characteristic of his direction of foreign policy, anticipated the rise of the new great Power in the West. "If France," he said, "occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way; I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be 'Spain with the Indies.' I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old."



*From an engraving after the picture by F. Crivichank.*

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON.

As a statesman, noted for his firm and resolute foreign policy.

taking large and frequent pinches of snuff, and turning from side to side till, I suppose, he wore his breeches through, seemed petrified, and sat fixed and staring with his mouth wide open for half a minute. Mr. Canning seemed actually to have increased in stature, his attitude was so majestic. I remarked his flourishes were made with the left arm. The effect was new and beautiful; his chest heaved and expanded, his nostril dilated, a noble pride slightly curled his lip, and age and sickness were dissolved and forgotten in the ardour of youthful genius. All the while serenity sat on his brow, that pointed to deeds of glory." Making every allowance for the natural extravagance of an ardent admirer of the statesman, this vivid description clearly shows that the oratory had an extraordinary effect on those who heard it. As much, indeed, is proved by the more prosaic records of Hansard, which show that Brongham, none too friendly a critic, spoke of Canning having displayed "a degree of fervour unprecedented in effect, even beyond the right honourable gentleman's former most eloquent orations."

Canning's position in the House now became one of commanding influence, and when in April, 1827, the Earl of Liverpool resigned, it was the most natural thing for the King to send for him to form a Government. Though Wellington, Peel, and Eldon refused to join him, he was able to get together a fairly strong combination, in which Lord Palmerston figured as

A tremendous impression was made by this speech, and the effect was heightened by an equally powerful second speech which Canning delivered the same evening in reply to some criticisms which were passed upon the Government policy. One<sup>1</sup> who was present describes the sensations which were produced by this remarkable display of oratory. "It was an epoch," he says, "in a man's life to have heard him. . . . Heavens! He surpassed even himself. The chaste elegance, the graceful simplicity, the harmonious tones of his opening speech, and the sublime energy of his reply, will haunt me to my grave. What a burst of feeling when he spoke of the Portuguese Charter! I shall never forget the deep earnestness of his tone and the blaze of glory that seemed to light up his features. He was equally grand when in his reply he said: 'I do not believe that *there* is that Spain of which our ancestors were so justly jealous, that Spain upon whose territories it proudly boasted that the sun never set.' But when, in the style and manner of Chatham, he said: 'I looked to Spain with the Indies, I called a New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old,' the effect was actually terrific. It was as if every man in the House had been electrified. Tierney, who before that was shifting in his seat, and taking off his hat and putting it on again,

<sup>1</sup> "Diary of an M.P."



*Engraving copy of the original painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.*

#### SIR ROBERT PEELE

An early portrait of the distinguished statesman who, during an active political career of forty years, was closely associated with the passing of several great measures, notably the Bill for the Repeal of the Corn Laws.

Foreign Secretary. But he did not live long to enjoy his triumph. Seized with illness in the middle of July, he retired to the Duke of Devonshire's villa at Chiswick to recuperate, and expired there on August 6th in the same room in which Fox had breathed his last. He found a last resting-place in Westminster Abbey, at the foot of the grave of Pitt, to whom he owed so much in life.

Amongst the great orators whom St. Stephen's Chapel knew, there are few who take a higher place than Canning. Endowed with a fine presence, great intellectual attainments, and a voice whose mellifluous tones needed only to be heard to charm, he dominated the popular assembly with rare power. When at his best, none of his contemporaries could approach him in eloquence and easy flow of language. The sentences welled forth in a bright, sparkling stream, arresting attention by their purity and fascinating beauty. He was gifted with a pleasing wit, which he exercised with telling effect when the occasion called for the light treatment of a subject. A more attractive personality altogether never appeared in English public life.



*From the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.*

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

Who on two successive occasions—in 1828 and again in 1834—filled the office of Premier.



LORD ELDON,

The well-known Lord Chancellor, in his coronation robes and attended by his page.

This survey of the period during which Canning swayed the House of Commons would not be adequate without some further reference to Brougham, his great political rival and antagonist. Like Canning, Brougham entered Parliament through aristocratic patronage. His sponsor was the Duke of Bedford, who, struck with his talents, offered him a seat for his borough of Camelford. Entering the House of Commons in the year 1810, the young politician, after a somewhat disappointing first appearance, pushed his way to the front by the force of a vigorous intellect operating under conditions favourable

to the display of ability. Industry and perseverance then, as subsequently, were the distinguishing traits of his character. Scarcely a night passed without his making a contribution to the debate. Sometimes he missed his mark, as the ever indefatigable orator is likely to do; but he more often succeeded in winning that kind of fame which is the meed of the Parliamentary who can without preparation intervene effectively in the ordinary discussions of the House. In this way stamping his individuality upon the popular chamber, he came in a few years to be regarded as a man to whom great things were possible.

Brougham found his great opportunity in the troubles of Queen Caroline. That flightiest and indiscreetest of Princesses early enlisted the services of the brilliant young lawyer-politician as her attorney-general, and in this capacity he was called upon to undertake her defence when, on her return to England in 1820, on the accession of George IV., she was confronted with the gravest of accusations that can be brought against a wife. Brougham threw himself with characteristic ardour and energy into the defence. With remarkable ability he championed the Queen's interests in the exciting discussions which accompanied her appearance in London, and when, after abortive attempts to patch up some understanding, Lord Liverpool's Government introduced in the House of Lords the famous Bill of Pains and Penalties, depriving the Queen of her Royal state and annulling her marriage, he assumed the duties of chief advocate with the determination to make the most of the opportunities which the case afforded for forensic display.

At this time of day it is difficult to realise the tremendous excitement which the proceedings against the unfortunate Queen aroused throughout the country. The City exuberantly espoused her cause, as did many popular bodies throughout the country. Vast, cheering crowds attended her public appearances, and the streets about her residence were choked during the greater part of the twenty-four hours by her supporters. So menacing was the aspect of affairs as the day of the opening of the trial approached, that troops from all parts of the country were drafted to the metropolis and its vicinity. At the Houses of Parliament extraordinary precautions were taken against a popular outbreak. A gunboat was moored in the river opposite to the House in the Cotton Green, in which the witnesses in the trial were lodged, and detachments of soldiers were posted in rooms and lobbies around the Peers' chamber. The Queen's passage through the streets from St. James's Square, where she was temporarily residing, to the Palace of Westminster was a triumphal progress. The popular fervour approached delirium. At imminent risk of their lives, women and children hung to the wheels of her carriage. The air was rent with shouts of mingled indignation and encouragement. On all hands there were demonstrations of sympathy and respect. Arriving at the House of Lords the Queen, with erect mien and radiant countenance, was handed from her carriage by the Usher of Black Rod, Sir Thomas Tyrerwytt. "Well, Sir Thomas," she said lightly, "here I am again, and here I shall



*From a painting by George Richmond*

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE,

Philanthropist and politician, who took a leading part in the movement for the abolition of slavery.

remain until *the day of judgment*." In the Peers' chamber itself she was received with every mark of respect. The Peers all rose on her entrance, and remained standing until she had taken her seat on the chair of state. But that the feeling against her was very strong was shown early in the proceedings by the vote given upon a motion by the Duke of Leinster for the rescinding of the order for the second reading. For this motion only 41 peers ventured to vote, while there were no fewer than 206 against it. Several days were occupied in hearing the opening statement for the prosecution and the evidence of the witnesses—chiefly Italian servants employed by the Queen during her stay in Italy. One dramatic incident marked these earlier proceedings. When Theodore Majocchi, on whose testimony the King's counsel chiefly relied to establish the Queen's guilt, stepped into the witness box, her Majesty cast on him a look of strong reproach, and muttering a poignant cry, darted out of the chamber; for the most part, however, the trial took a normal course.

In opening the Queen's case Brougham



Wagenaar del.

QUEEN CAROLINE.

From a portrait taken about the time of her trial.



LORD ERSKINE,

Who was Lord Chancellor in "The Ministry of All the Talents."

made a great speech, which lasted two days. It was a masterly analysis of the whole of the evidence, with a presentation of the Queen's case which wanted nothing in eloquence, argumentative force, or thoroughness. The impression it made on the Peers was very great, and in the country it helped to elevate the Queen to a yet higher pedestal of popularity. The end of the protracted business did not come until November. On the 6th of that month a division was taken on the question of the second reading of the bill, with the result that a majority of twenty-eight only was registered in its favour. On the third reading, which was called on November 10th, this majority was further reduced to nine. Deeming that discretion was the better part of valour, Lord Liverpool immediately announced the intention of the Government to abandon the measure. This declaration elicited from the venerable Lord Erskine an affecting speech, in which he spoke of his strength being "renovated and repaired" by the end of that "horrid and portentous excrescence of a new law,





THE TRIAL OF GREEN CAROLINE IN THE OLD HOUSE OF PEERS.

The incident represented in the picture is the examination of Theodore Majocchi by Earl Grey.

retrospective, iniquitous, and oppressive." This feeling was re-echoed in the country, where the most unrestrained rejoicings were indulged in at the practical acquittal of the Queen.

As a result of the trial, Brougham's position in Parliament and in the country was enormously strengthened. When Canning became Premier, he showed his appreciation of his old rival's talents by offering him the post of Chief Baron of the Exchequer. Brougham, however, was not at all anxious to exchange his political position even for so exalted an office. He declined the offer, urging as a reason that it would prevent his sitting in Parliament. "True," observed Canning, "but you will then be only one stage from the Woolsack." "Yes," replied Brougham, "but the horses will be off." In the House of Commons Brougham remained for a good many years longer, rising steadily higher in popular estimation. His talent for oratory found several notable occasions for display during this period. Amongst his most remarkable efforts was a speech delivered on law reform in February, 1828. For six hours the orator held the attention of the House while he poured forth a mass of erudition clothed in the most felicitous language. It was said afterwards by a writer in the *Quarterly Review* that, "directly or indirectly, it has probably led to a greater number of important and beneficial results than any other speech, ancient or modern." But if Lord Brougham could be serious and statesmanlike, he could also on occasion play the part of the swashbuckler. We have already seen how he demeaned himself in the episode with Canning. A somewhat similar incident occurred in 1830, when on very small provocation Brougham in the savagest manner attacked the Wellington Ministry. Concluding a long tirade, he stretched out his long thin arm and, pointing in the direction of the Treasury Bench, said: "I accuse you, I accuse his flatterers—those mean, fawning parasites—" Here Sir Robert Peel rose and demanded to know if Brougham included him in the category of "those fawning parasites." Brougham, thus challenged, made a grudging apology, and so the incident terminated.

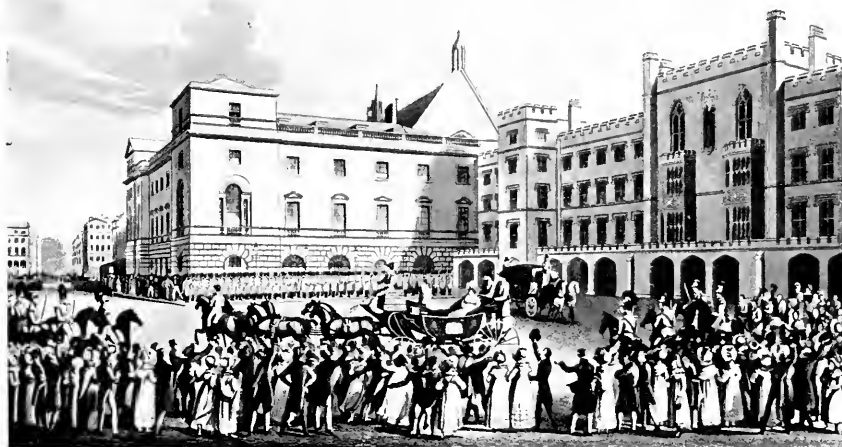


*From the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.*

EARL GREY,

The eminent Whig statesman, who, as Premier, introduced the first Reform Bill.

Despite his faults of temper, Brougham was immensely popular, and had a hold on the country the like of which was possessed by none of his contemporaries save Canning. It was to this fact, quite as much as to his great legal abilities, that he owed his elevation to the Lord Chancellorship. Brougham himself tells the story in his "Life and Times." He mentions that he was offered the Attorney-Generalship, and that he refused the post, expressing a willingness to take the Mastership of the Rolls, which then could conjointly be held in the House of Commons. To this both the King and the Ministers objected. The King, however, asked if the Great Seal had been offered to him, and on Lord Grey (the Premier) replying that it had not, because he anticipated an objection from his Majesty, the King intimated that there was no one he would rather have for his Chancellor. Thereupon the offer of the Woolsack was made and accepted. Brougham says that the King once or twice afterwards alluded to this when in particularly good humour, and



QUEEN CAROLINE RETURNING FROM THE HOUSE OF LORDS AFTER HER TRIAL.

*Amid the acclamations of crowds of admirers.*

called me his Chancellor as named by himself, and not by my colleagues." "In fact," adds Brougham, "I more than suspect that the Tories, on going out, warned him not to leave me in the Commons, member for Yorkshire, chief of the Popular party, and irremovable Master of the Rolls."

The final years of this story of St. Stephen's Chapel will ever be memorable for the stormy debates and incidents which took place there on the question of Reform. At the time the popular excitement rose to fever heat. The whole country hung on the words spoken at Westminster. It was universally felt that upon the issue of the great crisis depended the prosperity, and not improbably also the peace, of the country. There is no call here to trace in detail the history of the great movement which culminated in the peaceful revolution of 1832. But as final reminiscences of St. Stephen's Chapel, we may appropriately refer to some of the more striking episodes which marked the Parliamentary debates on the subject.

The passing of the second reading of the first bill on March 21st, 1831, was one of the great landmarks in the struggle. Macaulay's pen has left us a picture of the House on the eventful evening which ranks amongst the most vivid descriptions we have of historic events in Parliament. "Such a scene as the division of last Tuesday," says the historian, in a letter to his friend Ellis on March 30th, "I never saw, and never expect to see again. If I should live fifty years, the impression will be as fresh and sharp in my mind as if it had just taken place. It was like seeing Cesar stabbed in the Senate House, or seeing Oliver taking the mace from the table; a sight to be seen only once and never to be forgotten. The crowd overflowed the House in every part. When the strangers were cleared out and the doors were locked, we had 608 members present—more by fifty-five than ever were



"THE HOUSE WOT KEEPS BAD HOUSES."

*Parodied with all due respect to Sir Charles Wetherall.*

A caricature by Doyle illustrative of an inveterate bad habit of the House, and commemorating an occasion upon which a sitting lasted from four o'clock in the afternoon until seven o'clock the following morning.

—291, 292—we were all standing up and stretching forward, telling with the tellers. At 300 there was a short cry of joy, at 302 another, suppressed, however, in a moment, for we did not know what the hostile force might be. We knew, however, that we could not be severely beaten.

"The doors were thrown open, and in they came. Each as he entered brought some different report of their numbers. . . . We were all breathless when Charles Wood, who stood near the door, jumped on a bench and cried out, 'They are only 301.' We set up a shout that you might have heard to Charing Cross, waving our hats, stamping on the floor, and clapping our hands. The tellers scarcely got through the crowd, for the House was thronged up to the table, and all the floor was fluctuating with heads like the pit of a theatre. But you might have heard a pin drop as Duncannon read the numbers. Then again the shouts broke out, and many of us shed tears. I could scarcely refrain. And the jaw of Peel fell; and the face of Twiss was as the face of a damned soul; and Herries looked like Judas taking his necktie off for the last operation. We shook hands and clapped each other on the back, and went out laughing, crying, and buzzing into the Lobby. And no sooner were the doors opened than another shout answered that within the House. All the passages and stairs into the waiting-rooms were thronged by people who had waited till four o'clock in the morning to know the issue. We passed through a narrow lane between two

in a division before. The ayes and the noes were like two volleys of cannon from opposite sides of a field of battle. When the Opposition went out into the Lobby, an operation which took up twenty minutes or more, we spread ourselves over the benches on both sides of the House; for there were many of us who were not able to find a seat during the evening.

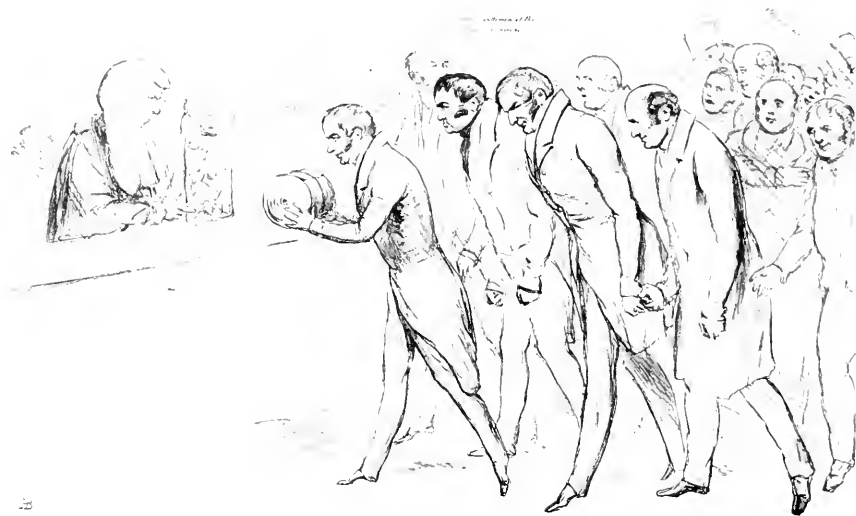
"When the doors were shut, we began to speculate on our numbers. Everybody was desponding. 'We have lost it. We are only 280 at most. I do not think we are 250. They are 300. Alderman Thompson has counted them. He says they are 299.' This was the talk on our benches. . . . I had no hope, however, of 300. As the tellers passed along our lowest row on the left-hand side the interest was insupportable



*From a drawing by A. D. Morris.*

THE CARRYING OF THE SECOND READING OF THE FIRST REFORM BILL IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

By a majority of one in a House of 608 members, the measure passed its second reading on March 21st, 1832, amid a scene of intense excitement.

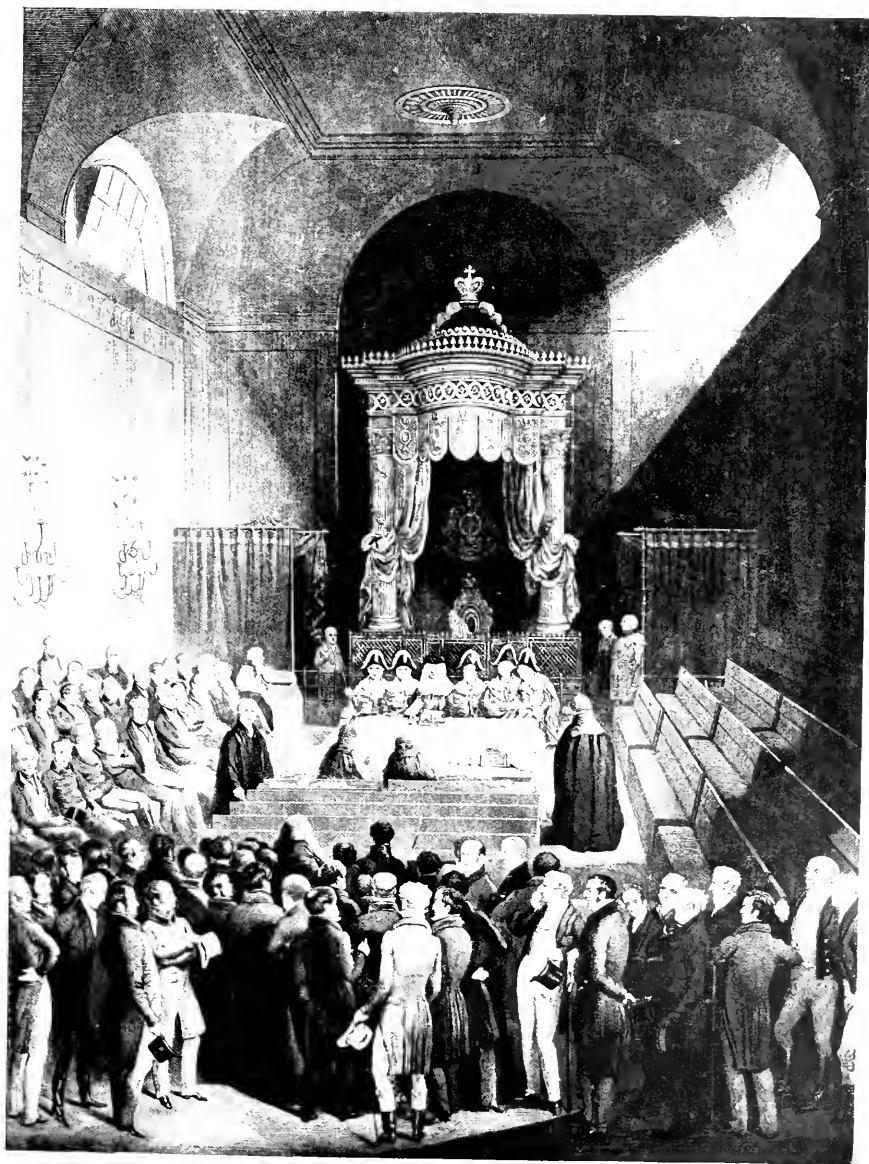


"BRINGING UP OUR BILL."

A contemporary caricature by a well-known hand representing Lord Althorp, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Earl Grey's Administration, handing over to the Lord Chancellor (Lord Brougham) in the House of Lords the secret Reform Bill. Most of the leading members of the Reform party in the House of Commons are represented in the picture.

thick masses of them; and all the way down they were shouting and waving their hats, till we got into the open air. I called a cabriolet, and the first thing the driver asked was, 'Is the bill carried?' 'Yes, by one!' 'Thank God for it, sir!' And away I rode to Gray's Inn. And so ended a scene which will probably never be equalled till the reformed Parliament wants reform."

The defeat of the Ministry on April 18th on an important amendment in Committee, the abandonment of the Bill, and the infliction of a second defeat four days later on a question of adjournment, led up to a demand for a dissolution, only reluctantly conceded by the King. It was under extraordinary circumstances that the final act was taken. "The scenes which occurred in the two Houses of Parliament," says Earl Russell, "so far as I was a witness to them, were singular and unprecedented. Before the King arrived the House of Commons was assembled, and Sir Robert Peel and Sir Francis Burdett rose at the same time to address the House. Lord Althorp, amid the confusion and clamour of the contending parties, following the precedent of Mr. Fox, moved that Sir Francis Burdett be now heard. Sir Robert Peel, on the other hand, imitating a precedent of Lord North, said, 'And I rise to speak to the motion.' But instead of saying a few words, as Lord North had done, to put an end to all further debate, Sir Robert Peel quite lost his temper, and in tones of the most violent indignation attacked the impending dissolution. As he went on, the Tower guns began to fire, to announce the King's arrival, and as each discharge was heard, a loud cheer from the Government side interrupted Sir Robert Peel's declamation. Sir Henry Hardinge was heard to exclaim, 'The next time those guns are fired they will be shot!' Presently we were all summoned to the House of Lords, where the King's presence had put a stop to a violent and unseemly discussion. The King, in his speech, announced the dissolution, and retired to unrobe. The scene that followed was one of great excitement and confusion."



THE REFORM BILL OF 1832 RECEIVING THE ROYAL ASSENT IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.  
With this official act terminated one of the most momentous crises in the history of the country.



GEORGE TROUT,

A well-known messenger of the House of Commons of the early part of the last century.

the legislation was too strong to allow the bill to get through without serious curtailment of its provisions. A vital amendment carried against Ministers precipitated a crisis. For a time the issues of civil war hung in the balance. At length, after Ministers had resigned and been recalled, the King gave written permission for the creation of a sufficient number of peers, if necessary, to force the bill through unemasculated. This, accompanied by a written appeal to the opposing peers by the King, was decisive. The measure passed its last stage on July 4th by a majority of 84, in a House of no more than 128 members.

The days of the old unreformed Parliament were now numbered. It faded into history, leaving behind it, with the recollection of some failings, many great and inspiring memories, and a record which, on the whole, is a source of pride to every true patriot. The new order of Parliament-men were not destined to sit long in the seats of the mighty. Less than two years after the reformed Parliament held its first sitting St. Stephen's Chapel was involved in the general ruin worked by the conflagration of October 16th, 1834.

Returning to the House of Commons on June 14th enormously strengthened, the Reform party immediately proceeded to introduce a second Reform Bill. The second reading was carried early in July by a majority of 136, and after protracted debates in Committee, the measure passed its final stage on September 21st. Its subsequent rejection in the House of Lords by a majority of 41 greatly exasperated the country. There was rioting at many centres, and the position of affairs became so serious that the Government deemed it advisable to take measures for the suppression of the political organisations. Meanwhile a third bill was drafted, and this was introduced in the House of Commons on December 12th by Lord John Russell. A majority of 162 was cast for the measure on the second reading, and on March 19th it passed its final stage by a majority of 116. Before the last division was taken, Lord John Russell made an impressive speech. In this reference was made to the critical character of the times, and the opponents of reform were told that the loss of the measure must result in a bloody conflict, involving the destruction of the British Constitution. The warning was not lost upon the House of Lords. After a debate extending over several nights, they on April 14th passed the second reading by a majority of nine. But the spirit of hostility to



## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE PRESS GALLERY.

IT is difficult to imagine the House of Commons at the present time without its Press Gallery. A corporation numbering considerably over two hundred members, possessing an elaborate organisation, and having at its disposal a commodious suite of dining, smoking, and writing rooms, it fills a very important place indeed in the legislative household. Yet, singular as it may seem, the institution, measured by the standard of Parliamentary time, is quite a modern one, dating very little farther back than the commencement of the last reign. There were Parliamentary reporters before that time, it is true; but they were tolerated rather than recognised, and sometimes, as we shall have occasion to show, the toleration took a form scarcely to be distinguished from positive prohibition.

Dr. Johnson has usually been regarded as the Father of Parliamentary reporters of the professional class; but the honour of first systematically recording debates in the House belongs to Sir Symonds D'Ewes, a sturdy old Parliamentarian who flourished in Elizabethan times. This worthy, with an industry which does him infinite credit, set himself to note down regularly the speeches made by his brother members. Amid many discouragements the worthy knight performed his self-allotted task for several years, and the fruits of his labour have come down to us in several portly tomes. Though these records will not compare with our modern Hansard's in fulness and accuracy, they yet give a most vivid account of Parliamentary doings in those remote times, the pages enshrining scraps of elegance and personal details which are of the utmost value to the historical student.

D'Ewes had several successors in this rôle of unofficial Parliamentary reporter. Burton, whose

Diary is amongst the classics of political literature, was one of these. With an industry not inferior to that of his predecessor in the note-taking line, he recorded the doings of the Commonwealth Parliaments, thus supplying to posterity an authentic account of perhaps the most interesting period in the life of Parliament. His reporting exercises were not free from embarrassment, and even a certain amount of personal risk. At that time note-taking was regarded as a sin of a heinous kind, and it had been attended in the past in some



HEAD OF A NEWSPAPER OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

cases with very heavy penalties.<sup>1</sup> Burton, therefore, had to pick his way warily—now concealing his notes when a suspicious member was near; now allowing his pencil to remain idle throughout an entire sitting, for fear of being called to account by those who frowned on the practice. He was extremely venturesome once or twice, as the entries in his Diary show; but, fortunately for history, he avoided the direct censure of the House.

Before Burton had become immersed in his self-imposed reportorial duties, the House had been disturbed by the action of irresponsible outsiders in giving publicity to debates. Diurnals made their appearance with reports for the most part compounded of materials furnished by members. The innovation was too flagrant an infraction of the practice of Parliament to be allowed to escape notice. On July 13th, 1641, a formal resolution was passed directing "that no member of this House shall either give a copy or publish in print anything that he shall speak here without leave of the House." This prohibition produced little result; so on March 22nd in the ensuing year a more drastic resolution was framed, proclaiming that "whatsoever person shall print any Act or passages of this House, under the name of *Diurnal*, or otherwise, without the particular licence of this House, shall be reputed a high contemner and breaker of the privilege of Parliament, and be punished accordingly." No further action of a specific kind appears to have been necessary at that period. But before the seventeenth century closed the question cropped up again, consequent upon the practice of "news-writers" including amongst their tit-bits of gossip references to the proceedings of the House. Strongly impressed with the importance of securing its doings from this vulgar publicity, the House on February 11th, 1695, ordered "that no news-writers do in their letters or other papers that they disperse, presume to intermeddle with the debates or any other proceedings of this House." On two subsequent occasions—on January 18th, 1697, and January 3rd, 1703—

the order was revived, and on January 25th of the latter year the proceedings of Committees of the House were included in the general ban. Still the newspaper men were not intimidated. The obnoxious references to the proceedings continued to be made in news-letters despatched from London. At length the House of Commons determined to make an example of these high contemners and breakers of Parliamentary privileges. In 1727 Edward Cave and Robert Raikes were, by order of the House, committed to prison for publishing reports in the *Gloucester Journal*, and were kept in custody for several days, only being released after expressing contrition for their offence and paying heavy fines.

Up to this period the publication of reports had been carried out in a very casual way. Soon a more daring and sustained attack was to be made on the policy of reticence. A clear-headed business man, full of ideas, and perhaps encouraged rather than otherwise by his contest with the House in 1727, Cave in 1732 formed the resolution to publish in connection with the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which he had just started, a regular account of the doings of



EDWARD CAVE.

The famous bookseller, who was one of the first to systematically publish Parliamentary debates.

<sup>1</sup> Oldfield relates that in the reign of Henry VII. a member was committed to the Tower for acquainting the King with the debates in Parliament, and both he and his posterity were debarred by an Act from ever sitting or serving in Parliament. In a similar case which occurred in Elizabeth's time the offender was committed to the Tower for six months, fined £500, and expelled the House.

Parliament. His practice was to attend the debates with one or two friends, take a few sly notes, and afterwards repair to some neighbouring coffee-house or tavern and put on paper the impressions gained. These rude notes were subsequently turned over to a literary hack for a final polishing preparatory to publication. Regarded as reports, the productions were quite beneath contempt, but they were sufficiently near the mark to arouse the irritable susceptibilities of Parliament. In the session of 1737 serious notice was taken of the breach of privilege involved. The speeches made on the debate which marked the occasion read curiously in these days. Sir William Yonge implored the House to suppress the practice of reporting the debates; "otherwise," he said, "you will have the speeches of the House every day printed even during your session, and we shall be looked upon as the most contemptible assembly on the face of the earth." Pulteney urged "that to print speeches, even if they should not be misrepresented, was making the speakers accountable without doors for what they said within." Walpole took a higher and what now seems a more common-sense view of the matter. "You have, with great justice," he said, "punished some persons for forging the names of gentlemen on the backs of letters; but the abuse now complained of is, I conceive, a forgery of a worse kind, for it tends to misrepresent the sense of Parliament and impose upon the understanding of the whole nation. It is but a petty damage that can arise from a forged frank when compared with the infinite mischief that may be derived from this practice. I have read some debates of this House, sir, in which I have been made to speak the very reverse of what I meant. I have read others wherein all the wit, learning, and argument have been thrown into one side, and, on the other, nothing but what was low, mean, and ridiculous."

These expressions of opinion undoubtedly voiced the general sentiment of the House, for without a single dissentient it adopted a resolution affirming it to be "a high indignity to, and a notorious breach of privilege of, this House" to publish reports of its proceedings, not only during the sittings of the House, but in the recess. Such a demonstration of Parliamentary feeling was not to be lightly disregarded, so Cave and his rival on the *London Magazine*, who had imitated his scheme of reports, resorted to the expedient of investing the debates with an ostensibly fictitious character. The *Gentleman's Magazine* published the reports as pertaining to the Senate of Lilliput, and the *London Magazine* gave a journal of the proceedings in a political club, conferring Roman names upon the speakers. This was a thin enough disguise, but it served its purpose. Interest in the reports rather increased than diminished after the change—so much so, indeed, that in 1740, Cave, who had hitherto mainly relied upon the services of William Guthrie, a well-known writer of that period, was induced to seek Johnson's aid to give a finer literary flavour to the compilation. Johnson, who



*After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.*

DR. JOHNSON,

The Father of professional Parliamentary reporters.



*Engraving painted by Thomas Bouch in the National Portrait Gallery.*

WILLIAM WOODFALL,

(“Memory Woodfall”), whose astonishing powers of reporting speeches without taking notes won for him a great reputation in political circles at the end of the eighteenth century.

was then struggling to win a position in the world, readily undertook the task, and soon remarkable evidences of his skill were seen in the pages of the *Gentleman's*. Never before in the history of English journalism had such speeches been published. Perfect in literary form, and adorned with many classical graces, they conveyed the impression that the Legislature was an assemblage, not of country squires, but of learned professors. Nor were they wanting in robust qualities. A fervent Toryism pervaded the effusions. As Johnson himself put it in describing his essays at reporting, he “let the Whig dogs have it.” It is to be feared that the segments set forth in very few cases resembled the expressed views of the ostensible utterers. Boswell, in fact, goes further, and declares that they did not in all cases even fit the characters of the men to whom they were attributed. However this may be, it is unquestionable

that the old Doctor in his later years was not at all proud of his achievements in this direction. He told his faithful henchman on one occasion that as soon as he found that the speeches were thought genuine, he determined that he would write no more of them, “for he would not be accessory to the propagation of falsehood.” Again, a short time before his death he expressed to Boswell his regret “for having been the author of fictions which had passed for realities.”

While it is thus pretty clear that Johnson was in no proper sense of the term a Parliamentary reporter, there is little doubt that his work in the *Gentleman's Magazine* had a powerful influence in securing the breaking down of the absurd custom of regarding everything that passed in the House as inviolably secret. When he dropped out of the business his place was taken by a Dr. Gordon, who greatly improved upon the old system, and for the first time, perhaps, gave the public a really accurate outline of the debate. His enterprise and that of others brought the usual censure. In 1753 a resolution couched in the familiar language was passed warning those concerned of the terrible consequences that might follow the publication of the proceedings of the House, even in the form of minutes or some such specious disguise. As well might the indignant Parliament-men have attempted to stop the incoming tide. For good or for evil the Press had secured a lodgment in the chamber, and it was never again to be ousted from it. A last vigorous effort, however, was made to assert the right of Parliament to control the publication of its debates. This was on the famous occasion in 1771 when the House fought the issue out with the Corporation of the

City of London. The circumstances of that memorable struggle need not be related at length here. Suffice it to say that after the House's decrees against the offending printers had been contemptuously set at naught, and it had retaliated on the insult offered to it in the imprisonment of one of its officers by committing the Lord Mayor (Crosby) and one of the Aldermen (Oliver) to the Tower, the position of affairs as regards the publication of debates remained exactly where it was before the contest was entered upon. Representatives of the newspapers continued to resort to the public galleries; their reports, more or less full and accurate, regularly appeared. At the beginning of the session of 1778 a member (Colonel Luttrell), incensed by a distortion of his views by one of the "news-writers," threatened as a protection against such indignities to move the strict enforcement of the standing order relative to the exclusion of strangers. But beyond eliciting a strong expression of opinion from Fox in favour of full and free publication, the intervention of the gallant legislator came to naught.

It was at about this period that the reporting element in the House of Commons was strengthened by the adhesion of William Woodfall—next to Johnson, perhaps the most remarkable man whose name figures in the annals of Parliamentary reporting. Woodfall was a man of fine literary taste and excellent judgment. As a dramatic critic he enjoyed a reputation second to that of hardly any of his contemporaries. But what gave him his greatest fame was his marvellous memory. So extraordinarily retentive was his mind that after hearing a speech he could without an apparent effort write it out almost word for word, even days after it had been delivered. According to a colleague (Mr. Taylor, of the *Sun*), his practice during a debate was to close his eyes and lean with both hands upon a stick. Thus posed, he would remain for long periods, seldom looking up excepting to get the name of a new member with whom he was not acquainted. Powers so remarkable were calculated to conciliate prejudices, and it is not surprising that Woodfall enjoyed amongst members a great popularity. To his influence and example, possibly as much as to the development of the power of the Press, was it due that before the century had closed there were in regular attendance at the House a considerable contingent of reporters taking notes of debates, not only without disguise, but with a modified degree of approval. To Perry, the proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, is credited the introduction of the system of "turns," by which each reporter has a specified time for taking notes and is then relieved. It is stated that Lord Chancellor Campbell, when making his way at the Bar, was a member of Perry's corps. But he was in mortal dread lest his association with the reporters should be discovered. Since then the tie between the Gallery and the Bar has been strengthened by a connection which has embraced some of the most famous men of the legal profession.

In the earliest days of regular Parliamentary reporting no special arrangement was made for the convenience of the Press visitors. They took their chance with other strangers, and if they failed to get a seat, it was so much the worse for them and for the papers they represented. Owing, it may be, to representations in high quarters, or more likely to potent arguments of a different kind, a regular system was



DANIEL O'CONNELL,

("The Liberator"), whose quarrel with the reporters supplies one of the most amusing episodes in the history of Parliamentary reporting.

eventually introduced of reserving for the representatives of accredited organs the back seat of the public gallery. At that time, and indeed until the building of the new Houses of Parliament provided an opening for the introduction of a more dignified system, it was the custom of the doorkeepers to levy a toll of 2s. 6d. on each visitor who was not armed with a member's order and wished to be present at the debates. The reporters were exempt from this nightly impost, but as a set-off their proprietors paid at the beginning of every session a fee of three guineas for each of their representatives.<sup>1</sup> This handsome *douceur* secured for the reporter very little beyond bare sitting accommodation in the gallery. There was a small room on the left-hand side of the gallery immediately above the Lobby, where he was permitted to hang his hat and coat when going on duty and to await his call during a debate. But this was



*Photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

MR. JUSTIN MCCARTHY,

The Irish Nationalist leader and novelist, who was for many years in the Reporters' Gallery.

the limit of the Legislature's generosity to the Press. The reporter usually found it necessary to go to his office to transcribe his notes, and consequently his "turn," or period of note-taking, was what would now be considered a very long one, extending ordinarily to three-quarters of an hour.

It was not merely in its omission to provide the members of the Press with reasonable facilities for carrying out their duties that the Legislature showed that it failed to appreciate the public importance of the publication of a correct account of its debates. In the early days of the century there was an instance in which its indifference operated to exclude reporters altogether from the House at a time when there was a special call for them to be there. The occasion was Pitt's great speech on the state of the nation on May 24th, 1805. Owing to the anticipated rush for the galleries, special instructions were given to the attendants as to the admission of visitors, and these had the effect of excluding the reporters until the speech—by general consent the greatest Pitt ever made—was nearly finished. Very naturally the papers complained loudly of the treatment meted out to them. One of the strongest of the complaints was sent to the then Speaker (Abbott) by Mr. Windham, who expressed the opinion "that the

claim thus openly made, however qualified, is a matter that calls for animadversion." It is clear from this that there was no love lost between the leading men of that period and the Press. The circumstance probably was not entirely due to the shortsightedness of the former. Reporting was then in its infancy. Shorthand was undeveloped, and the art of condensation was not so widely known as at present. Moreover, political feeling prompted the reporters to misrepresent or curtail speeches which were inimical to the interests their papers were anxious to maintain.

<sup>1</sup> The number of reporters who used the gallery under this arrangement was stated by Mr. Francis Wright, the chief doorkeeper, in his evidence before the Select Committee which sat in 1833 to consider the establishment of the House of Commons, to be as follows: *Times*, 10; *Morning Chronicle*, 10; *Morning Herald*, 27; *Morning Post*, 27; the *Guardian*, 4; the *Mirror of Parliament*, 7 or 8; the *Morning Advertiser*, 3; the *Albion*, 1; the *Globe*, 1; the *Standard*, 1; the *Courier*, 1; the *True Sun*, 6; and the *Sun*, 6. The witness stated that when he was first appointed in 1803 there were not half the number of reporters using the gallery as at that time. There were then no evening papers.



THE PRESS GALLERY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Each paper has its allotted "box" in the front row. The back row is utilised by reporters waiting their turn, leader-writers, and others having a mission to the gallery.

A striking instance in point is supplied by a complaint made against the reporters by Mr. Wilberforce about this period. This politician read to the House, amidst peals of laughter, an extract from a newspaper report which represented him to have advocated the cultivation of potatoes in the following terms: "Potatoes make men healthy, vigorous, and active; but what is still more in their favour, they make men tall. More especially was he led to say so, as being under common size; and he must lament that his guardians had not fostered him under that genial vegetable." Such audacious distortion of speech would in these days not be possible on the part of a Gallery reporter; but a century ago the gentlemen of the Press in the House permitted themselves a freedom which is astounding. Thus we have it on authentic record that on one occasion, when a solemn speaker was on his legs and there was a somewhat prolonged interruption in the flow of his eloquence, the occupants of the Press bench called in loud tones for a "song from Mr. Speaker." It is not wonderful, when incidents like these happened, that the reporters were not popular, and that about the year 1795 a proposal was seriously under consideration by distinguished members of the House "to appoint shorthand writers in order that as the debates are published they may at least be correct."<sup>1</sup>

Despite the coldness of the attitude of the authorities, the Press gained enormously in power at the House as the years went by. This was clearly brought out during the historic quarrel between O'Connell and the reporters. The circumstances of this famous episode in the annals of Parliamentary reporting may be recalled. The *Liberator* in the session of 1823 brought forward, as a breach of privilege, a misrepresentation of a speech he had made on the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Colchester's Diary, vol. i. p. 24.

Irish title question. In defence, the author of the impugned report urged that "during his walk from the House to the newspaper office, the rain, which was falling heavily at the time, had most unfortunately streamed into his pocket, and washed out the notes he had made of Mr. O'Connell's speech. Upon which the latter remarked that it was the most extraordinary shower of rain he had ever heard of; inasmuch as it had not only washed out the speech he did make, but had washed in another, and an entirely different one."<sup>1</sup> This was a fair retort, and the complaint of itself was not unreasonable. But the members of the Press, offended at some general charges of misrepresentation preferred by O'Connell, deemed that the circumstances demanded that they should make common cause with their offending colleague. Consequently they determined to suppress O'Connell's speeches altogether. The boycott, to adopt a modern phrase, was not at all to the Irish leader's liking or to his interest. The reports of his speeches were in a large measure the elements of his strength, and any cessation of the supply was calculated to operate seriously to his detriment. He therefore determined, after three nights' suppression of his eloquence, to turn the tables on the reporters—to boycott the boycotters. This he did by the simple expedient of using the power given him under the rules of the House of calling attention to the presence of strangers, and so securing the complete clearance of the public galleries. The move created a considerable sensation. Members had become so accustomed to the reporters that their absence had a most paralysing effect on eloquence. "There was no animation in their manner—scarcely any attempt at that wit and

sarcasm at each other's expense so often made on other occasions. Their speeches were dull in the highest degree, and for the first time within the recollection of Parliamentarians they kept their word when, on commencing their orations, they promised not to trespass at any length on the patience of the House."<sup>2</sup> In fine, O'Connell, in making the power of Parliament felt, also demonstrated the enormous hold that the Press had secured on the House. The quarrel was finally adjusted after a fashion, and it was left to the representative of a later generation to spy strangers again in the House for the purpose of obstructing business by impeding the operations of the Press.

Curiously enough, the earliest special provision made for the Press was in the House of Lords. Accommodation was arranged in the old Peers' chamber, destroyed by the fire in 1834, and it was first availed of on October 15th, 1831. Before that the reporters had to take notes as best they could on the floor of the House, without making too ostentatious a display of their notebooks. It was probably in some measure because the results in these circumstances were not altogether satisfactory that the Peers were induced to extend their hospitality to the reporters. The example was not immediately followed by the Commons—indeed, the old



*Photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

SIR EDWARD CLARKE, K.C., M.P.

Who commenced his brilliant career as a reporter in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons.

<sup>1</sup> "Recollections of a Parliamentary Career," by John O'Connell, M.P., vol. i. p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> "Random Recollections of the House of Commons," by James Grant, p. 50.





THE PRESS GALLERY OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

The seats in the gallery above the clock are those assigned to the members of the Press.

is, directly above and at the back of the Speaker, it is admirably placed for seeing and hearing everything that goes on, and to this reason, combined with the fine acoustic properties of the chamber (especially since the roof was lowered), we may attribute the rarity of the complaints that speakers are not heard. In the House of Lords, where the Reporters' Gallery faces the woolsack, and the position is otherwise objectionable, things are less satisfactory. Attempts have been made to remedy the deficiencies at different times, but without much effect, as the chamber, though architecturally and decoratively very beautiful, is acoustically defective.

While the authorities in recent years have shown themselves desirous of meeting the requirements of the reporters in the Houses themselves, they have not been unmindful of their comfort and convenience in other respects. Room after room has been placed at their disposal until, with the latest additions made in the past session (1900-1), they now occupy a very considerable section of the portion of the building at the back of the House of Commons, and facing New Palace Yard. There are not only telegraph and writing rooms, and other adjuncts of a professional character, but a generous House also provides smoking and dining and tea rooms—in short, on a small scale, all the features which are to be found in the accommodation below stairs for members.

The provision made, though liberal to a degree compared with that once allowed to the

system of relegating the note-taking fraternity to a back seat in the Strangers' Gallery might have continued for many years but for the fire, which compelled the authorities to face this question with many others. They could only decide it in one way. In fitting up the old House of Lords as a temporary House of Commons, the precedent established by the Peers was borne in mind, and on February 19th, 1835, the gentlemen of the Press for the first time had an allotted position in the popular chamber. The circumstance did not pass without notice. There were comments on the significance of the innovation, as illustrating the homage paid to public opinion and the recognition of the right of the people to know, through the medium of the Press, all that passed within the legislative walls.<sup>1</sup>

Once extended, of course, the recognition was not withdrawn. In preparing the designs of the new Houses of Parliament Sir Charles Barry gave particular attention to the needs of the reporters, and, as far as the House of Commons is concerned, established them in a position which it would have been difficult to better. Situated, as their gallery

<sup>1</sup> Greville's Diary, vol. iii. p. 205.



*Photo by Elliott & Fry, Baker Street, W.*

MR. H. W. LUCY,

("Toby, M.P."), a brilliant member of the Press Gallery who has written much and well on Parliamentary life and history.

in many and varied walks of life. Dickens was an old Gallery hand. Eminent authors and politicians like Mr. Justin McCarthy have had their early training there. It has been the cradle of the reputations of men of the law not less renowned than Sir Edward Clarke and the late Lord Chief Justice (Lord Russell of Killowen). From its ranks the House itself has been recruited to a not inconsiderable extent. In a sentence, it has from small beginnings and humiliating associations attained to a position of honour and influence which entitles it to be regarded as a national institution.

In connection with the Press Gallery a brief reference may appropriately be made to the publication of the official reports of debates. As we have seen, the printing by newspapers of speeches delivered in the House is by the public accepted as a record of what is said, but these accounts bear no responsibility as an official record. For years Cobbett's "Political Register" and the "Parliamentary History" took a place as works of authenticity. But it was by Luke Hansard, a poor, friendless boy, coming to London from Norwich at the end of the eighteenth century, and obtaining a situation in a printer's office as a compositor, that the well-known "Hansard" was developed. Published in volumes and sessional series, the "Debates" became a valuable and indispensable record of the proceedings of Parliament. The Hansard family subsequently became, as well as publishers of the "Debates," printers to the House of Commons, and made a large fortune, until in recent years the Government, by means of the Controller of the Stationery Office, took the publication under their control.

members of the Press, is none too ample for the needs of the great body for whom it is intended. With the lapse of years has grown up an institution vastly differing from that which in the earliest days of accredited Parliamentary reporting went by the name of the Reporters' Gallery. News agencies—organisations quite unknown a half-century since—now occupy an important place in the hierarchy of note-takers as the suppliers of reports to hundreds of papers all over the country, and indeed the Empire. A representative of the world-famed Reuter's Agency is there to transmit to every capital, and to every populous spot on the face of the civilised globe, the latest pronouncement of Ministers on a matter of foreign policy, or a digest of the most recently issued Blue-book. The great provincial newspapers also have successfully asserted their claims to have representatives in the gallery, and there, too, are to be found summary-writers, leader-writers, London correspondents, and occasionally editors, who drop in to see for themselves how things are going in the political world, in order that they may the better direct the policy of the papers they control. It is a Press world in itself, and one which has its own treasured traditions and its peculiar customs and usages. Amongst the names inscribed upon its roll are those of men who have won high distinction

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *THE DESIGN OF THE NEW PALACE.*

Now that we have brought this great work to the stage of completion, we may appropriately survey the structure and take note of its chief features. Its design has been subjected to much criticism at different times, and in some respects it is not happy. The profuse ornamentation gives an impression of tawdriness, and it is, besides, quite unsuited to the London climate, as the mutilated character of many of the statues sufficiently attests. Moreover, there is a certain air of monotony about the long, unbroken facades which detracts from artistic effect. Still, with all their limitations, the Houses of Parliament remain without a compeer among modern buildings in this country. Their majestic towers and broken outlines, their fine vistas and their vast proportions (they occupy eight acres of ground), all tend to make them an object of wonder and admiration to the stranger who sees them for the first time.

In style the building is Gothic. "Of all styles," we are told, "Mr. Barry admired most the Early English, but he thought it hardly fit for other than ecclesiastical purposes. Finally, he chose Perpendicular, thinking that it would lend itself more easily to the requirements of the building, and to the principle of regularity which he intended to introduce in his design. But if he could have had a site to his mind, and had been left free to choose his style, there is little doubt that he would have preferred Italian. The example most



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

From a photograph taken from the Surrey side of Westminster Bridge.



THE VICTORIA TOWER, FROM THE GARDEN.

The dominating architectural feature of the Houses of Parliament. One of the largest and highest square towers in the world.

frequently in his thoughts was Inigo Jones's grand design for the Palace at Whitehall. He actually prepared some sketches and studies for an Italian design, in defiance of the instructions to competitors. But he felt that under all circumstances Gothic was the style best fitted for the new Palace, and if Westminster Hall was to be made a feature in the design, the only style possible; and he was consoled for the loss of Italian by the thought of the facility given by Gothic for the erection of towers, the one method by which he thought it possible to redeem from insignificance a great building, in which convenience forbade great general height, and for which a low and unfavourable site had been provided."

These general considerations help us to understand and appreciate the architectural features of the building. But it must never be forgotten that the Houses of Parliament, as we know

them to-day, were only a part of Sir Charles Barry's original conception. His plan was "to enclose New Palace Yard, creating at the angles a lofty gate tower, visible from Bridge Street to the Abbey. Beyond this point was to be a grand quadrangle, in which the Victoria Tower should be the principal feature, and from that tower a grand approach was to lead to Buckingham Palace." A glance at the illustration on page 172 will show what a transformation the additions would have effected in the appearance of the design. The change, it will generally be conceded, would have been for the better. It would have given the design that unity which it at present lacks, and supplied a noble approach to the precincts, such as the importance of the building demands. Economical reasons, as they often do in these matters, stepped in to prohibit the scheme, and it was reluctantly laid aside by the architect. But he reverted to it in 1853, when the question of providing new Government offices was under discussion. He then urged with much insistence that to leave New Palace Yard open, or to enclose it only with a rail, would be artistically a great blunder, since the Parliament buildings would be viewed from the higher ground of Bridge Street, and appear actually sunk, while the area itself, having a considerable diagonal fall across the open space, would further tend to destroy the effectiveness of the prospect. "By pulling down the Law Courts, and opening the whole side of Westminster Hall, he conceived that a still worse effect would be produced;

for the scale and parts of the Hall are so large that it must be utterly incongruous with the buildings around it." These arguments failed to carry weight with the Government of the time. Nor did the project recommend itself more strongly to Lord Palmerston's Ministry, when the architect's son brought it forward in 1864. New Palace Yard was left open as a permanent arrangement, and quite recently the final touch has been given to the plan he condemned by the appropriation of the site of the old Law Courts as an open space. Therefore, to criticise Sir Charles Barry for the lack of harmony in the Parliament Square front of the Houses of Parliament is scarcely fair. No one was more sensible than he of the deficiencies of the design in its truncated form.

A remarkable building in every respect was that which finally emerged from the ashes of the old Palace of Westminster. In point of size it is unique amongst the public buildings



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, FROM LAMBETH BRIDGE.

This view of the Houses of Parliament gives the best general idea of Sir Charles Barry's great work.

of this country, and probably the only Continental structures to compare with it are the Vatican and the Escorial at Madrid, upon the latter of which seven millions were lavished. Occupying, as we have shown, eight acres of ground, and embracing within its confines upwards of five hundred rooms, many of them of great size, it is more a little town than a building. Even those who have frequented the place for years have been known to be temporarily at fault as to their proper direction in its labyrinthine corridors or its complicated maze of courts. In a decorative sense the great work is not less wonderful. There are some seven hundred monuments in and about the structure. Nearly every single foot of the front has its own cunningly worked design. To Sir Charles Barry, in fact, may fittingly be applied in a slightly altered form Heber's description of the Mogul builder of the Taj Mahal at Agra, that he "built like a Titan and finished like a jeweller."

To see the magnificent pile at its best it must be viewed from the Lambeth Palace, preferably in the early afternoon of a late summer day, when the soft mists, mellowed by the setting sun, are gathering about its lofty towers and its pinnacled roofs. From that point we are able to realise something of the real grandeur of Sir Charles Barry's design. On the left, dominating the whole, arises in majestic beauty to a height of 336 feet the Victoria Tower, the largest and loftiest square tower in the world. From this gigantic structure to the river is the south front, impressive in its simplicity and regularity of outline. Then, stretching away for a distance of 960 feet, is the noble river front, flanked at either end by projecting wings, whose lofty pinnacles and rich tracery and carving emphasise afresh the

sumptuousness of the design. It has often been objected that the lowness of this front in comparison with its great length seriously detracts from its effectiveness, and it is impossible to deny the justice of the criticism. But it should not be overlooked that the site is a deplorably bad one for a palatial erection of this character. It is so low that the spectator must almost inevitably look down upon a considerable part of the building. Then it has also to be remembered that the extreme length given to the front was not contemplated when the plans were originally framed. Heavy demands for increased accommodation as the building progressed<sup>1</sup> forced upon Sir Charles Barry extensions in this direction which were against his better judgment. He attempted, not without success, to neutralise the effect of the change by slightly raising the whole



THE BASE OF THE VICTORIA TOWER.

In this picture an excellent idea is furnished of the massiveness of the tower and the beauty of the architectural detail.

<sup>1</sup> It is stated by Mr. Barry in his life of his father that claims for space arising out of the ventilation schemes of Dr. Reid absorbed one-third of the cubical contents of the building as originally planned.



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, FROM PARLIAMENT SQUARE.

This view of the Parliamentary buildings, though the most important, is the least effective.

centre and heightening into towers the masses which flanked it. But all that he could accomplish in this way did not give the front that impressiveness of elevation which, owing to its great length, it should possess. Still, the fault, if fault it is, is not sufficiently grave to destroy the general effectiveness of the design. London has architecturally few fairer prospects to offer than that quarter-mile of fretted stonework rising, as it seems to the spectator, from his Lambeth vantage-ground, from the swift-running tideway.

It is unfortunate that on the land side there is no really good general view obtainable of the Houses of Parliament. What should be the best front, that facing towards Parliament Square, is its worst. Here the spectator looks upon a mass of buildings without uniformity of design or architectural beauty. On the one hand is the mediæval front of Westminster Hall, surmounted by its vast, high-pitched roof, offering to view a great expanse of blue slate. On the other is the modern Gothic work of Sir Charles Barry, seen in its most unfavourable light. The Clock Tower, which should play an important part in the picture, is too near to have its proper effect. The whole is a jumble which leaves on the stranger who sees only this side of our senatorial buildings a very inadequate notion of their beauty and importance.

Infinitely more imposing is the prospect which offers from the pavement about Henry VII.'s Chapel. Here we get to a part of the building in which Sir Charles Barry was able to work out his own ideas, free from the trammels imposed in the case of the New Palace Yard front. The Victoria Tower, to which reference has already been made, is the imposing central feature. Curious as it may seem, it was not provided for in the original design. It was added to meet the requirements of Dr. Reid in the matter of ventilation. Yet no part of the building had more time and care bestowed upon it by the architect. The plans underwent repeated alterations. The tower, we are told, "was originally treated with all the solidity



THE VICTORIA TOWER.

The largest and loftiest square tower in the world. It is 356 feet high.

the Senate and its ventilating shaft. Viewing the structure from the further side of Old Palace Yard, we miss something of its imposing grandeur by the nearness of the object, but nevertheless the vista which is provided by the western façade, with the huge mass of the tower looming against the sky, is an exceedingly fine one.

Considered as a whole, the exterior of the pile cannot, however, be regarded otherwise than as disappointing. It is imposing in its bigness, it is, as we have seen, in some of its aspects full of beauty; but it lacks that overpowering sense of distinction which we have a right to expect in so costly and ambitious a structure. The deficiencies of the site account for much. They were so thoroughly realised at the time the work was undertaken, that proposals were made to locate the new Houses of Parliament in some other position than the old one, amongst the areas suggested being the high ground in St. James's Park and Trafalgar Square. Still, had as the site is, it is not alone responsible for the artistic shortcomings of the building. If Sir Charles Barry's plans had been carried out in their completeness, and the missing wings and grand gateway in New Palace Yard had been added, a far greater artistic success would have been achieved.

of a 'keep,' but the reduction in plan was compensated by increase in height, and the whole character of the design was necessarily changed. The entrance at first was of moderate dimensions, and the top of the niche band ranged with the cornice of the building. It was now raised to its present magnificent dimensions; the niches remained, and the upper part of the tower was divided into three large and two smaller stories. The design and arrangement of these cost incalculable trouble before it assumed its present form, divided into three windows, and the upper story rendered the prominent one by the arched and canopied windows.<sup>7</sup> In short, this architectural after-thought became the great dominating factor in the design. But it is something more than an architectural feature. Accommodating an archway fifty feet high and proportionately wide, it supplies an appropriate State entrance to the building, and compensates for the loss of the grand staircase which was one of the original ideas in Sir Charles Barry's fertile brain. It is, besides, at one and the same time, the great record-house of



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.*

THE main entrance to the Houses of Parliament is by way of the stately Victoria Tower, the most remarkable feature, both in design and construction, of this noble pile. Seventy-five feet square, and four hundred and twenty feet high to the flag-staff from which the Royal Standard floats on State occasions, and the Union Jack always during the sittings of Parliament, the structure arrests attention by reason of its massive and splendid proportions. The tower is more than twice the height of the Monument at London Bridge, is sixty feet higher than the top of the cross on the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, and is nearly three times the height of the leaning tower of Pisa. It is situated so near the river that doubts were at first entertained as to the possibility of its erection, with due regard to safety. In order to ensure stability the building operations were prosecuted with the utmost caution. Only thirty feet of the tower was erected in a single year, and meanwhile the most vigilant watch was kept to detect any signs of settlement. Fortunately nothing untoward occurred then, or has occurred since, to cast doubt on Sir Charles Barry's judgment in designing so striking an architectural feature and placing it in the position it is—a stone's-throw from the swift-rushing waters of the Thames.

If outwardly the tower is remarkable, it is internally not without special features of interest. Over the entrance archway the longest spiral staircase in the world begins, giving access to the top of the tower. The windings give the idea of looking through the wrong end of a telescope. It is a difficult way, trodden by few feet, for the various chambers of which the tower is composed are utilised for the storage of State records in little request. An absolutely fireproof system of construction renders this building the safest, as it is perhaps also the most ornate, muniment-house in the world.

Access to the interior of the Palace is by way of the Royal staircase under the archway. This is an imposing flight of steps, lined with statuary and embellished with a wealth



THE ENTRANCE TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

Through this doorway direct access is obtainable to the most important apartments of the building.

of architectural detail. Passing the Guard Room, the visitor finds himself in the Royal Robbing-Room. Standing in this apartment and facing the door leading to the interior of the Palace, he is on a direct line with the Speaker's Chair at the opposite extreme of the building. It is possible to proceed the entire distance of seven hundred feet without ascending or descending a single step.

The King's Robbing-Room contains chairs of State of handsome design. On the ceiling of the room badges of the English monarchs are painted, and upon the walls are the first of the fresco paintings which abound in the many rooms presently to be described. Of recent years some controversy has taken place regarding the condition of these works of art. The question first came into prominence in 1894, when Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who was then



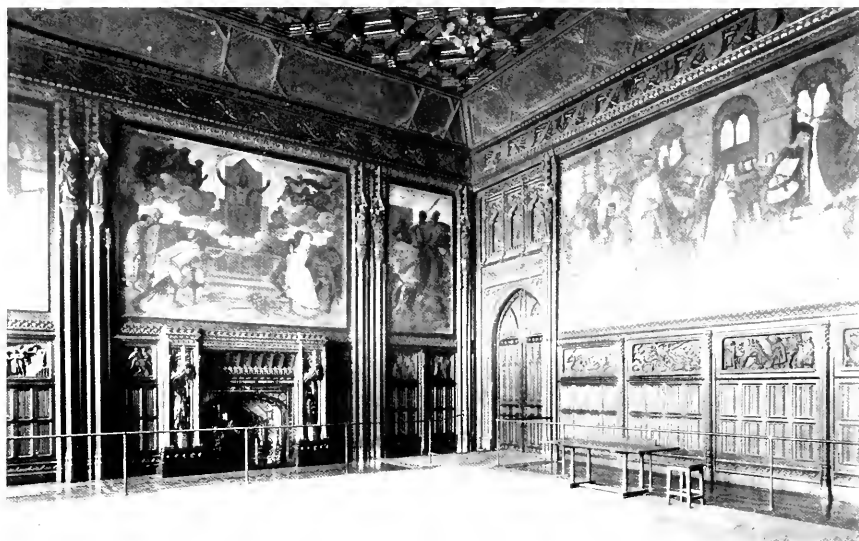
*Reproduction by permission of the Art Council of London from a large restoration of the picture by Dr. Moller, R.A.*

"THE DEATH OF NELSON."

From the famous fresco in the Royal Gallery.

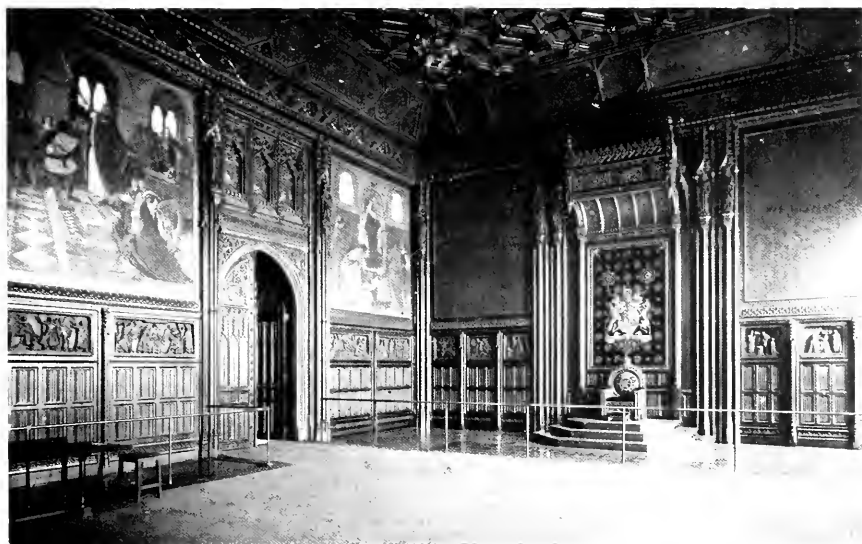
First Commissioner of Works, discovering that some of the pictures were showing signs of decay, consulted the President of the Royal Academy on the subject, with the result that Mr. A. H. Church, professor of chemistry, was called in to give an opinion as to the best means of preserving the pictures. That gentleman at once became interested, and most readily placed his services gratuitously at the disposal of the Government. He made experimental trials upon the services of the frescoes, carefully keeping them under observation, and subsequently made an exhaustive report to the Ministry, explaining the result of his work, suggesting certain means to be adopted in future for better preserving the frescoes, and offering his services again should they be required.

In the Robbing-room the legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table is taken as the theme for a series of paintings by Mr. Dyce, R.A., and attention is at once



THE KING'S RORRING-ROOM.

Where the Royal procession is formed on the opening of Parliament.



THE KING'S RORRING-ROOM.

Another view of the apartment, showing the Royal chair.

fixed upon them. The subjects are: "*Hospitality*"—"the admission of Sir Tristram to the fellowship of the Round Table"; "*Courtesy*"—"Sir Tristram harping to La Belle Isidore"; "*Generosity*"—"King Arthur, unhorsed, is spared by his adversary"; "*Religion*"—"the vision of Sir Galahad and his Company"; and "*Mercy*"—"Sir Gawaine swearing to be merciful and to protect all ladies."

In this room the Royal procession is formed, and proceeds to the Royal Gallery—the largest apartment, excepting Westminster Hall, in the building. The Royal Gallery, a hundred and ten feet long, admirably carries out the idea intended. At ordinary times it is destitute of all furniture and cumbersome fittings, but upon State occasions rows of seats are placed along



*Reproduction of the fresco by the Art Union of London, and being a reproduction of the picture by D. MacLise, R.A.*

"THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON AND BLÜCHER AFTER WATERLOO."

From the famous frescos in the Royal Gallery.

both sides, under the control of the Lord Great Chamberlain, who issues tickets of admission to visitors desirous of seeing the procession pass along.

The fresco paintings here are the well-known pictures by D. MacLise, R.A.—"The Meeting of Wellington and Blücher after Waterloo" and "The Death of Nelson." Both are studies intensely dramatic and picturesque. They are companion pictures, each measuring forty-five feet long by twelve feet high. The figures are painted life-size, and the artist has availed himself of every possible means to secure accuracy of the portraits as well as of the details of military and naval costumes of the period.

It was in the Royal Gallery that on July 18th, 1901, Earl Russell stood his trial for bigamy. Marked by all the picturesque accessories which attend a State trial, the proceedings excited much interest in political and social circles. At the cost of several hundred pounds the interior was completely transformed to serve the purposes intended. At one end a Royal





# THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY KING EDWARD VII.

THE KING, in a white tunic and crown, passing through the Royal Hall, on his way to the Palace Chamber.



*Fig. 1. Choir of the Cathedral of St. Peter, Rome.*

The view shows the choir (separated from the choir stalls) and the choir stalls. The choir is immediately in front of the choir stalls, in which the choir boys are placed in the choir.

# THE CHOIR OF THE CATHEDRAL

throne and canopy of crimson cloth was erected, as the trial was supposed to take place in the actual presence of the Sovereign. Upon the dais in front of the throne was placed a chair of State for the occupation of the Lord High Steward (Lord Halsbury), who acted as president at the trial. Other of his Majesty's judges who had been summoned to attend were accommodated upon wool-sacks in front. Right and left of the throne seats were placed for Irish and Scottish peers who are not peers of Parliament, and seats were also allocated for peeresses and eldest sons of peers. Near the judges were tables for officials of the court, counsel, and others, and a witness-box was erected close by. A chair for the accused peer occupied a prominent place in the centre, between the wool-sacks and the Bar, which divided the actual precincts of the court from strangers privileged to attend. The remainder of the space within the Bar was filled with benches, covered with scarlet cloth, for peers who formed the jury to decide the fate of



THE PEERS' CHAMBER: VIEW FROM THE WOOL-SACK.

The galleries at the end are reserved for strangers and members of the Press; those at the sides are for Ladies.

the prisoner. The actual trial proved of great interest to the student of constitutional forms, but it is of so recent occurrence that there is no need here to do more than state that it resulted in a sentence of three months' imprisonment upon the Earl following upon his plea of guilty.

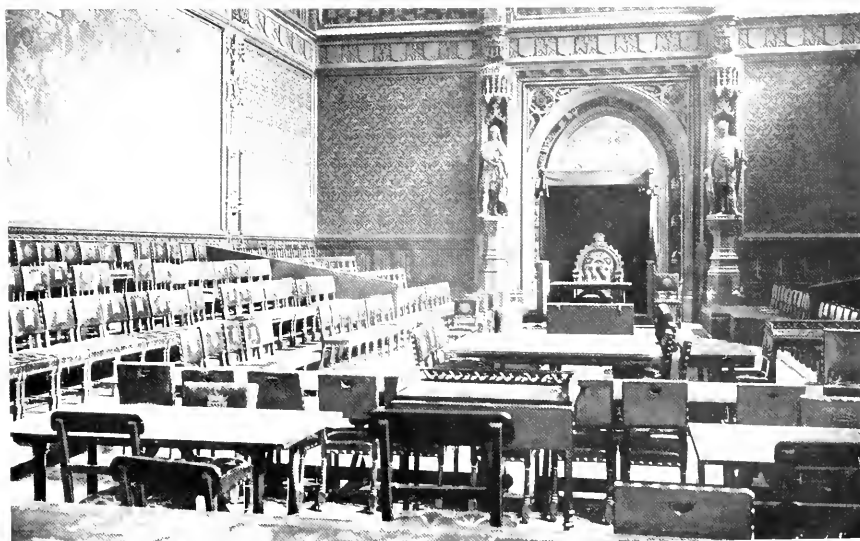
Resuming our tour, we come to the Prince's Chamber, where the Sovereign is received by the leading nobility on great State occasions, such as the opening of Parliament. The apartment is an ante-room to the House of Lords, and was originally intended to form the upper end of the Royal Gallery. It is of the same height as that chamber, but of a width which prevents a just appreciation of the beauty of the surrounding decorations, which are very profuse. The splendid marble statue group of figures by Mr. J. Gibson, R.A., "Her most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria," sitting upon the throne, holding the sceptre and the laurel crown, supported by "Justice" and "Clemency," is an attractive work, but bare and cold, and out of character with the arrangements of the chamber, giving it a cramped and congested





THE ROYAL GALLERY.

Here distinguished visitors are permitted to see the Royal procession pass through at the opening of Parliament.



THE ROYAL GALLERY, AS FITTED UP FOR THE TRIAL OF LORD RUSSELL.



THE PRINCE'S CHAMBER.

Where the King is received by the leading nobility, no strangers being permitted to be present.

gorgeous decorations and embellishments, and the exquisite harmony of the colouring all go to make up a picture of a very impressive kind. To be viewed at its best the splendid apartment must be seen, as it was recently, when the Sovereign, in the fullest regal state, attends to open Parliament in person. The spectacle then presented excels in stately magnificence anything that this, or probably any other, country has to show. An exact description of the ceremony will be given in a subsequent chapter, and meanwhile we may supply some further particulars of the leading structural and decorative features of this, the culminating effort of Parry's genius for design.

The dimensions of the chamber are 92 by 48 feet, the height being about the same as the breadth. The excellent use made of the area

appearance. The fireplaces are of elaborate design, and the bas-reliefs of Mr. William Theed, "The Field of the Cloth of Gold," "The Escape of Mary Queen of Scots," "The Murder of Rizzio," "Raleigh's Chivalry to Queen Elizabeth," and others are well worth inspection, as also are the full-length portraits of Sovereigns of England and their consorts. The ceiling of the apartment is dark blue with gold-work.

#### THE PEERS' CHAMBER.

If the visitor enters one of the doors on either side of the Prince's Chamber and takes his stand in the Peers' chamber, he will have a striking *coup d'œil* presented to him. The beauty of the architecture, the perfect proportions of the chamber, the



THE BAR OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

In the enclosed space the Speaker stands when attending the Upper House; members of the Commons stand behind him.

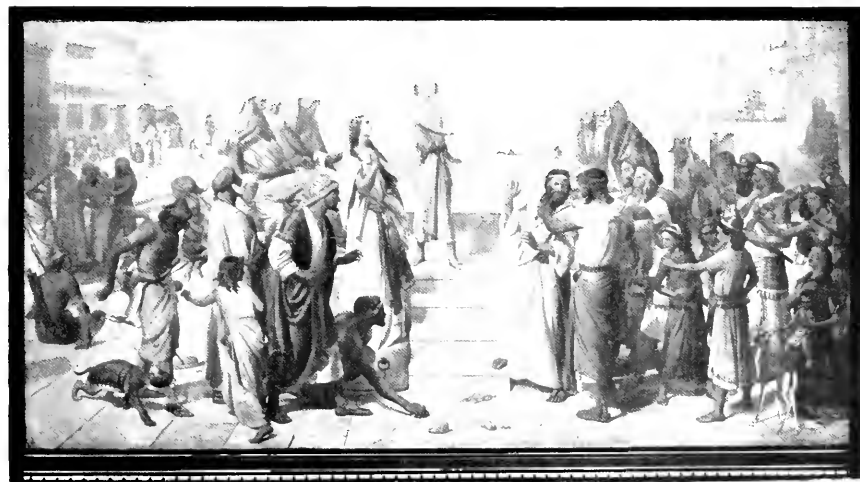


From a photograph by Sir Benjamin Stone, M.P.

Fresco in the PEERS' ROBING-ROOM

"MOSES BRINGING DOWN THE TABLES OF THE LAW," BY J. R. HERBERT, R.A.

*J. Benjamin Stone*



From a photograph by Sir Benjamin Stone, M.P.

PAINTING IN THE PEERS' ROBING-ROOM

"THE JUDGMENT OF DANIEL," BY J. R. HERBERT, R.A.

*J. Benjamin Stone*



"Spirit of Justice," by D. Machie, R.A.

"Spirit of Chivalry," by D. Machie, R.A.

"Spirit of Religion," by J. C. Horsley, A.R.A.

PEESCOES OVER THE STRANGERS' GALLERY IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

of 4,140 feet at the command of the architect gives the appearance of a much larger hall. No massive chandeliers or lustres interrupt the view of the elegant ceiling, which is built perfectly horizontal, with massive ribs carved and gilded, and divided into compartments and panels of sub-divisions; at the intersecting points are pendants, which in no way interfere with the design. The historical devices which figure upon the ceiling are of great beauty. Regal crowns and Royal monograms are appropriately painted at the throne end, while at other parts cognisances of the earlier monarchs are represented: the white hart of Richard II., the sun of the House of York, the crown in a bush of Henry VII., the falcon, the dragon, and the greyhound, the lion passant of England, the lion rampant of Scotland, the harp of Ireland. Sceptres and orbs, the scales of justice, ecclesiastical mitres and croziers, etc., all find a place among the paintings of the panelling above. The United Kingdom is not alone represented, for devices can be seen of the pomegranate of Castile, the portcullis of Beaufort, the lily of France, and shields with the armorial bearings of counties which composed the Saxon Heptarchy. The whole ceiling is a study of heraldic art. A soft, mellow light is obtained in the daytime by means of stained glass windows on each side of the House, extending nearly from the roof more than half-way down towards the floor. Upon the windows are rich paintings representing the Kings and Queens, arranged in chronological order and divided into sections, of Royal lines of England and Scotland, and, after the Union, of the crown of Great Britain. Below the windows is an oak panelling supplying exquisite specimens of the art of wood-carving, and along the sides of the House runs a light gallery with a single row of seats supported by an elegantly designed railing of brasswork. The entrance to this gallery is by doors in the oak panelling, and here at times distinguished lady visitors watch the proceedings below. The ladies<sup>1</sup> of the

<sup>1</sup> Occasionally, however, the presence of ladies has a disconcerting effect upon noble orators, as witness the following extract from Lord Malmesbury's memoirs: "The number of ladies who attended the debate (on Lord Ellenborough's want of confidence motion, May 12th, 1855) created great displeasure among the peers. Lord Ellenborough said that it made him nervous; and Lord Lyndhurst positively refused to speak, saying that the House looked like a casino, and not a place where business is transacted. Lord Rothesdale was also very angry, as the ladies overflowed from the gallery into the House. This invasion will, I fear, lead to more stringent and less agreeable arrangements in future."

Royal Family and other distinguished visitors may upon occasions of interest be seen seated in this gallery, no objection being entertained in the Upper House to the visible presence of the fair sex. At the north end of the House, immediately above the Bar and facing the throne, are built convenient galleries for strangers (who are admitted upon the orders of peers) and for the representatives of the Press. Behind these galleries, within three archways, are painted frescoes, "The Spirit of Justice" and "The Spirit of Chivalry," by D. Maclise, R.A., and "The Spirit of Religion," by J. C. Horsley, A.R.A.

The floor presents to the spectator three divisions, the upper and lower sections occupying the entire width of the House. The former, as we have seen, is entirely taken up by the throne and canopy, while the other end, under the Strangers' Gallery, forms a space below the Bar, and is technically outside the precincts of the chamber. Here during the sitting of the House strangers having the *entrée* are allowed to stand, and a limited number of chairs are placed for ladies, who are admitted upon the personal application of members of either House to the Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod, who is seated close to the Bar, and has charge of the arrangements of this portion of the House. In the body of the House, comprising the central division, is placed, in front of the woolsack, the table at which the Clerk of the Parliaments and his colleagues are seated. The remaining space on the floor is filled up by cross benches, and at each side five rows of other seats rise in an elevated position to the side walls. Noble lords who are members of the Government, and their supporters, sit at the right of the throne, and the Opposition peers upon the left. The cross benches are reserved for those who have no pronounced political opinions, and upon ordinary occasions may here be seen H.R.H. the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, it being contrary to usage for peers of Royal blood to identify themselves with either political party.

Leaving the House of Lords, the massive brass gates at the doorways and the standards used for lighting purposes afford a welcome relief to the eye from the sombreness of the Peers' Lobby, which is used as a cloak-room. To the right are passages leading to the dining-rooms, libraries, etc., and to the left, somewhat out of the track we are pursuing, is situated the Peers' robing-room. This apartment was originally intended for a hall



FIREPLACE IN THE PRINCE'S CHAMBER.

The bas-relief overmantel represents "The Field of the Cloth of Gold."

of justice, but was found too small for the purpose. It is now used for the meetings of Royal Commissions, Committees, etc. The frescoes here, by J. R. Herbert, R.A., have attracted considerable attention in the world of art. They illustrate "Human Justice and its Development of Law and Judgment," "Moses bringing down the Tables of the Law," and "The Judgment of Daniel."

#### THE CENTRAL HALL.

From the Peers' Lobby a short corridor leads to the Octagon Hall, which is the centre of the building, and marks the division between the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Each of the eight sides is beautifully arched; the roof is supported by massive beams, and the windows are of stained glass. Over the archways north and south, leading respectively to the House of Commons and House of Lords, are glass mosaic pictures of the patron saints



THE CENTRAL HALL, SHOWING THE LAST STATUE OF MR. GLADSTONE.  
The door behind it is the entrance to the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons.

of St. George and St. David, the work of Sir E. J. Poynter, P.R.A., and other similar works. St. Andrew and St. Patrick will, when finished, find a place upon the alternate recesses of the walls. The Central Hall is used principally as a waiting place for strangers wishing to interview members, or seeking admission to the gallery of the House of Commons, the entrance to which is in one of the corners. In this hall, at times of political excitement, animated crowds may sometimes be seen waiting till the small hours of the morning to learn the first news of an important division expected to take place in the House of Commons. Round the hall are statues of deceased statesmen of modern times—Earl Russell, Earl Granville, Sir Stafford Northcote, and the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone. The last named is a lifelike representation of the popular statesman, standing in a characteristic attitude. It is the most recent addition to the statuary of the Palace.

The encaustic tile pavement of this hall and the corridors is specially noticeable. Inscriptions and mottoes are freely introduced. The most conspicuous is that in the Central Hall, where the



ST. STEPHEN'S HALL.

The site of St. Stephen's Chapel, used as the House of Commons for three hundred years.



STATUE OF SIR CHARLES BARRY,

Placed at the foot of the staircase leading to the committee-rooms.

visitor, as he paces the floor, reads: "Except the Lord keep the house their labour is but lost that build it."

Passing under the eastern archway of the hall a passage gives access to a small lower waiting hall at the foot of the staircase leading to the upper story of the building, where the committee-rooms are situated. On the first landing of this staircase a statue of the late Sir Charles Barry, the architect of the Palace, is placed in a position strangely inappropriate and unworthy of the man who devoted the greater part of his life to designing this great pile.

On the west side of the Central Hall, on a slightly lower level, is St. Stephen's Hall. This occupies the actual site of the old St. Stephen's Chapel, in which the House of Commons met for three hundred years. In the hall brass tablets indicate the positions occupied by the Speaker's Chair and the table of the old House. The actual table designed by Sir Christopher Wren in 1707, and saved from the fire in 1834, is now to be seen in the members' tea-room, it having been placed there at the suggestion of Sir Reginald F. D. Palgrave, K.C.B., late Clerk of the

House of Commons, who devoted much time and thought to locating the positions of historic interest in connection with the old building and the new.

Compared with other parts of the Palace, St. Stephen's Hall is plain as regards decoration, but although no paintings are to be seen upon the walls, round the hall are marble statues of bygone statesmen who have taken their share in the Parliamentary warfare of previous generations. The visitor is confronted with the effigies of Hampden, Walpole, Chatham, Burke, Fox, Pitt, and Grattan, with others who have thundered out their eloquence almost upon the spot upon which he is standing, and though unpretending and simple, the apartment in point of historic interest ranks higher than any part of either House of Parliament.

Passing for a few moments out of the western door, we stand upon the flight of steps in front of the large stained glass window, and obtain a fine view of Westminster Hall.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### *DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.*

FROM the Central Hall the visitor approaches the House of Commons by the corridor to the left as he enters from St. Stephen's Hall. During the sittings of the House admission is jealously guarded by two experienced police constables, who have strict orders to allow no unauthorised person to enter. It may be noted in passing that the whole of the precincts and approaches of both Houses of Parliament are guarded by the civil authorities, contrary to the custom which obtains in most foreign senate houses, where the military are much in evidence. This arrangement is by no means accidental, for it is a fixed principle of the Constitution that armed soldiers, theoretically servants of the Sovereign, must not be permitted to control any of the proceedings of the people's representatives. The historic incident already narrated of the attempted arrest of the five members by Charles I. will occur to mind in



*Reproduced by permission of the Art Union of London from their large plate of the picture by E. M. Ward, R.A.*

FRESCO IN THE COMMONS CORRIDOR: "THE LAST SLEEP OF ARGYLL."



BUST OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.  
Placed on the members' staircase of the House  
of Commons.

that one evening a well-known member had been entertaining at the House a small party, among them a thought-reading expert, who at that time was creating a considerable stir in London society. The idea suggested

this connection. To the unwarrantable intrusion of the misguided Stuart King was in large measure due the subsequent Revolution. Incidentally it established more firmly the practice of civil supervision of the legislative precincts; so that even now an order goes forth at the opening of every session directing the Commissioner of Police to watch over the convenience of members coming to and going from St. Stephen's, an order responded to by the despatch of an experienced body of picked men of the A Division, who discharge their duties with unflinching tact and discretion under the supervision of an officer of long experience.

The Commons corridor contains the final series of frescoes, among them being "The Last Sleep of Argyll," "Monk Declaring for a Free Parliament," and "The Acquittal of the Seven Bishops." Passing them, the visitor enters the Lobby, a description of which has been given in another chapter. To the right of the Lobby is the Library corridor, and here we notice ranged along the walls rows of oak-panelled lockers, which are allotted one to each member, and used for keeping private documents. At the end of this corridor is a passage leading to the Speaker's offices, and a staircase which gives access to the smoking-room, where friends of members are admitted. In this room some years ago a scene of rare interest took place. It happened to some one that a demonstration in the smoking-room would be a pleasant way of passing a dull evening. To another the even happier notion occurred of getting the late Mr. Gladstone to join in the *séance*. It was a somewhat startling proposal, but with the exercise of diplomacy it was successfully carried through. At the appointed hour the right honourable gentleman, who was then Premier, duly appeared in the smoking-room, a part of the House which the oldest member never remembered seeing him in previously. In his eager, impulsive fashion he entered into the spirit of the thing, and after witnessing with interest the experiments upon others, handed himself over to the thought-reader for the exercise of his powers. It was not an entirely successful demonstration. Indeed, the operator confessed freely that he had never had a more difficult subject. The incident, however, created much amusement, and served the useful purpose of providing a subject for small talk for days afterwards.

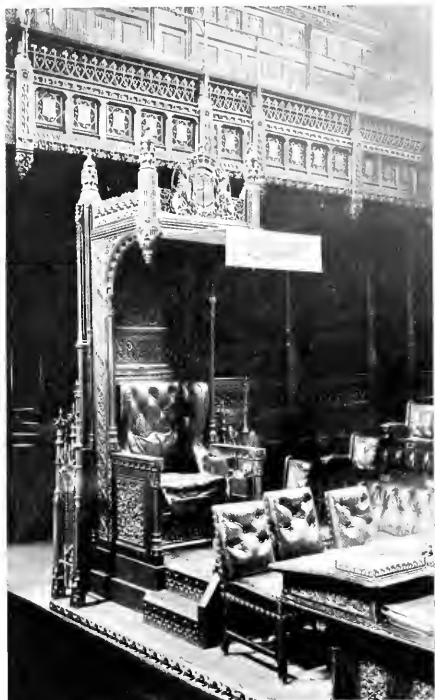


MR. HENRY D. EMSKINE, C.V.O.,  
The Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons and Groom  
of the Robes to his Majesty the King.

Retracing our steps to the corridor, we notice at the head of the stairs the newspaper-room, separated by folding doors from the tea-room, where are hung a number of ancient prints showing the old Palace of Westminster, the bequest of Sir William Fraser, M.P.

## A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a narrow, ornate street in a historic Indian city, likely Jaipur. The street is flanked by multi-story buildings with intricate carvings and balconies. The perspective is looking down the length of the street, which is flanked by ornate, multi-story buildings with balconies and intricate carvings. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights.

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a narrow, ornate street in a historic Indian city, likely Jaipur. The street is flanked by multi-story buildings with intricate carvings and balconies. The perspective is looking down the street, with a dark, shadowed area in the foreground and a bright, overexposed area in the background.



THE SPEAKER'S SEAT, HOUSE OF COMMONS.  
A beautiful specimen of carved oak work.

Upon the members' staircase are marble busts of the late Mr. W. H. Smith and the lamented Lord Randolph Churchill. The latter effigy is placed upon an elevated pedestal close to the wall, and is a lifelike representation of the statesman in his official robes as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The artist has happily caught the expression of the noble lord when in his prime, and the figure seems to look down upon the spot he so frequently passed.

At the door of the Legislative Chamber, the quaint hooded chairs of the doorkeepers are placed; here sit the two important officers of the Sergeant-at-Arms guarding the entrance to the House. Their duties are of a responsible nature. The face of every member is known to them, and their vigilant eyes are always on the alert lest any strangers should attempt to pass through the doorway. The chief doorkeeper has fitted by the side of his chair a handle, by which electrical communication is made with all parts of the building when a division is called, bells ringing for two minutes, while the sand-glass on the table of the House runs down. He also heralds the approach of Black Rod when that functionary appears to summon the Commons to the Lords, and calls aloud, "Make way for the Speaker!" when that high personage passes out of the House. The door is of massive oak, and on one of the panels a small grating can be uncovered from within, to enable the Sergeant-at-Arms to issue directions when a division is proceeding and the door closed and locked. The stone archway of the door is finely carved, and concealed electric lights bring into prominence the minute work of the sculptor.

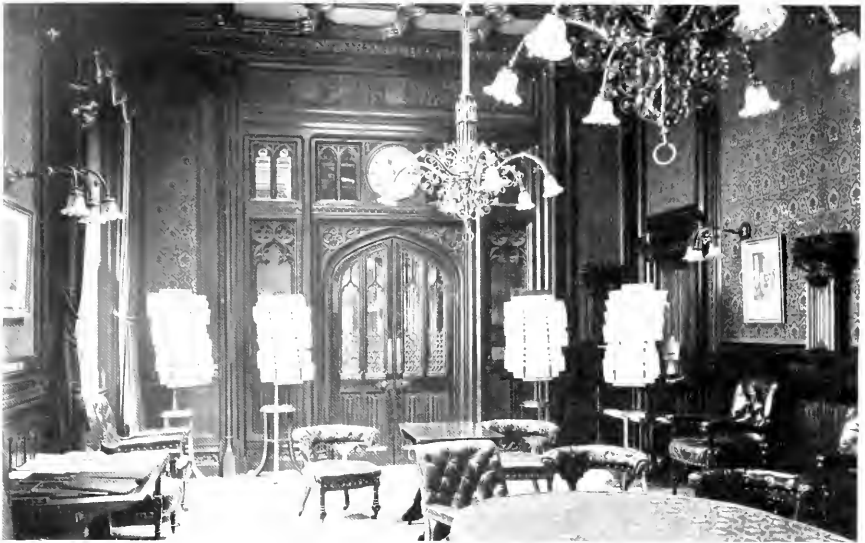
At the extreme end of the corridor is the suite of rooms which comprise the Library, a full reference to which is made in a special chapter. Turning back and proceeding again to the Lobby, we see the members' private staircase, which affords a direct outlet from the Commons to the Cloisters and cloak-room on the ground floor, and gives access besides to Westminster Hall, the Star Chamber courtyard, and New Palace Yard. In the cloak-room the now familiar tape machines are at work bringing the latest news from the outer world. Another comparatively modern innovation is a room set apart for secretarial work. Here busy members contrive, in the intervals of their legislative labours, to transact, with the aid of private secretaries, a considerable amount of urgent work, both connected with their Parliamentary duties and their private business. Typewriters are available in the building, and the telephone is also at hand, so that it is possible for an active legislator to make the utmost use of his leisure. A further concession to the spirit of progress which has been made of late years is the provision along the side of the Star Chamber court of a convenient place for the storage of bicycles, these modern means of locomotion being used to a considerable extent by members. Special accommodation for motors has yet to be supplied, but doubtless it will be forthcoming in the not distant future.



*From a photo by Sir Benjamin Stone, M.P.*

PART OF THE CLOISTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL.  
Now used as a cloak-room for members of the House of Commons.

*J. Benjamin Stone*



NEWSPAPER-ROOM, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The papers are arranged upon stands in various parts of the room.

On passing into the House the visitor is struck by its small and unpretentious appearance in comparison with the magnificence of the gilded Upper House. As regards the seating accommodation, although at times some inconvenience may be felt, the general arrangements are deemed sufficient, for a larger House would look desolate with a small attendance of members, and, moreover, the important question of the acoustic properties had to be carefully considered in fixing the size. In the House as at present constructed, any member speaking can be heard without difficulty, and the strain upon an orator is minimised. As to the want of embellishment, the House of Commons, it should be remembered, is designed for conducting the business of the nation, while the House of Lords is the scene of functions in which display and ceremony play a conspicuous part. But with all its limitations the House of Commons chamber is really a handsome apartment. It is of the same width and height as the Lords, without any cross benches in the body of the House. The rows of dark green-covered seats, with the wide gangway in the centre, rise with an easy gradient on each side, and the galleries along the sides take off any appearance of bareness. The fine rich oak woodwork, the coloured decorations of the panels round the galleries, and the relief of the bright brasswork at parts give the impression of stability and usefulness. The Speaker's Chair, built of elegantly carved oak, with the massive hood above, is traditional in its construction, and the table of the House, also planned like those formerly used, occupy a large space of the floor. At the table sits the Clerk of the House, in wig and gown, with the two assistant clerks beside him. Books for quick reference are upon the table, and at the end the mace is placed in full view of all present, while at either side of the mace are large brass-clamped boxes in which are deposited the Roll of Parliament signed by members upon taking the oath. The box on the Ministerial side of the House, to the right of the Speaker, is exactly opposite the seat of the Leader of the House, who when speaking frequently strikes emphatically the wood to enforce his arguments. Marks of the signet rings worn by Mr. Gladstone are still to be seen—an evidence of the "force" of his arguments.

The chair of the Sergeant-at-Arms, near the Bar, is always occupied by that officer or his deputy when the House is sitting. He is responsible for carrying out the orders of the House in case of disorder arising, and he carries the mace to and from the House, and into his charge offenders against the rules or dignity of the House are committed, he being their custodian while they occupy the prison house, built in the lower part of the great Clock Tower.

The galleries for members running along the sides of the House under the large windows are chiefly used when the House is crowded, but it is contrary to custom to speak from this position, though upon occasions members have astonished the House by standing up and asking questions of Ministers, who have replied to them. At the end of these galleries, close to that of the Press, seats are allotted for the Chaplain of the House and the Speaker's private secretary, and near the end, joining the Distinguished Strangers' and Peers' Galleries, clerks and officers of the House by usage may occupy seats.

The Peers' Gallery is on the Government side of the House, and runs from the clock in the centre to the west wall. The King, when Prince of Wales, was not an infrequent visitor, and occupied the seat of honour over the clock. Ambassadors, judges, and other privileged personages are accommodated in the front gallery, running from the centre to the east wall, and immediately behind them seats are found for other distinguished visitors, admission to these galleries being controlled by the Speaker. The remaining part of the gallery, providing one hundred and fifty seats, is for strangers, who are admitted on personal application to the Speaker's secretary by a member of the House. Behind the gallery may be noticed a screen similar to that at the other end of the House in front of the Ladies' Gallery, and this conceals a single row of seats, also for ladies, the Sergeant-at-Arms having the privilege of granting admission to it.

The better-known Ladies' Gallery is divided into two parts. One side is at the disposal of the Speaker's wife, who has at her command a number of seats for personal friends, H.R.H. the Princess of Wales and other Royal ladies, wives of Cabinet Ministers, and other leaders of fashion, usually have the *entrée*. The other parts of the gallery are at the disposal of



MEMBERS' SMOKING-ROOM, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Games of chess and draughts are played in this room.

members, but so limited is the accommodation that a ballot for places takes place a week in advance.

Under the galleries on either side of the door, the back row of seats below the Bar is reserved for private secretaries of Ministers and chief permanent officers of public departments, whose aid is indispensable to the Ministers. The doors to these seats are just at the entrance and beside the inner swing-doors of the House. It was at the bottom of the steps on the Ministerial side of the House that some years ago a miscreant placed the dynamite which exploded and wrecked a portion of the House, bringing down the entire front gallery.

The ceiling of the House, horizontal in the centre and sloping at the sides and ends, is fitted with panels of pale-coloured glass and coloured designs. Behind the glass are the lighting arrangements, and the visitor at night is struck with the beautiful way the whole House is lighted. The strong gas-lights, with powerful reflectors, shine with equal power through the tinted glass. The ornamental pendants have rings of jets concealed. Behind each pillar supporting the galleries, and in various otherwise dark corners, small electric lights are placed. The whole effect is much admired. Not a shadow is to be seen; no glare strains the eyes;



GRAND STAIRCASE, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Used by members only. The entrance is in Westminster Hall.

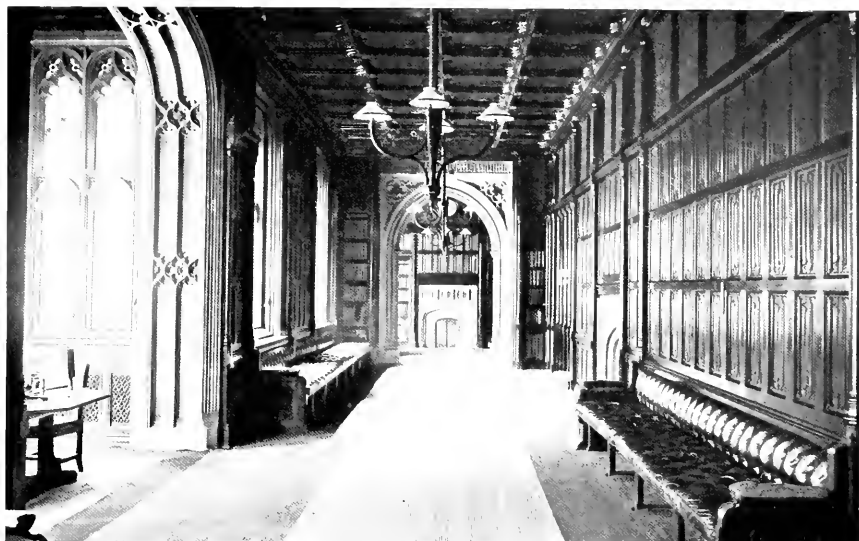
the appearance is that given by mellow sunlight. From the back of the Speaker's Chair a passage leads to Ministers' private rooms and official residences, and there is also a private staircase giving access to the Ladies' Gallery. Surrounding the body of the House the division lobbies form part of the main structure. They are wide, commodious, and well fitted up, with writing-tables placed near the bay-windows, and with bookcases along the walls containing volumes of Parliamentary debates.

The method of taking a division of the House is very simple, yet most effective.

The question being put from

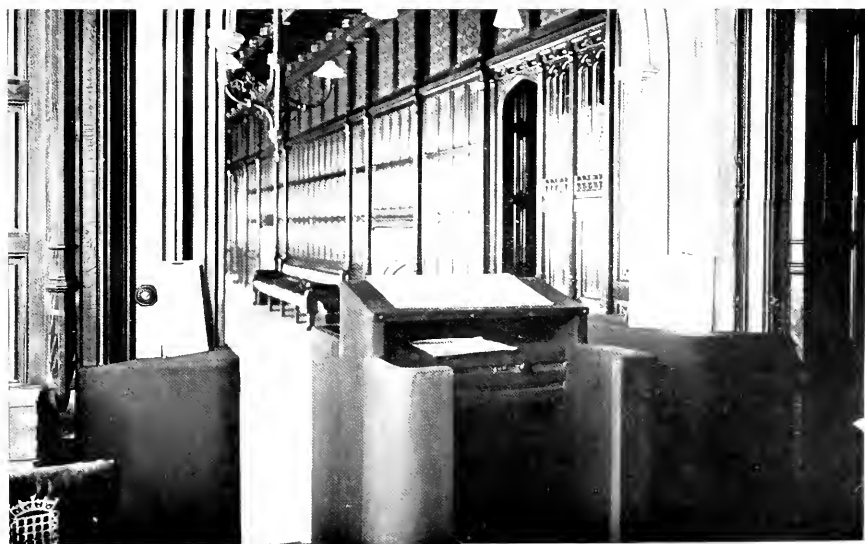
the Chair, strangers withdraw from below the Bar and tellers are appointed. The "Ayes" pass out behind the Speaker's Chair into the Lobby on the west side of the House. The "Noes" leave by the main door near the Bar on the east side, both returning in the opposite direction to which they enter, but the House is entirely cleared before the doors are opened for members to return. Clerks take the names of all passing through, the names being printed with the votes and proceedings. The tellers count the numbers audibly as the members pass them at the doors to return into the House, and, the record agreeing with the list taken by the clerks, the result is reported to the House. It may be mentioned that only since 1836 have the names of members voting been published, and that formerly all strangers in the galleries, including the members of the Press, were excluded; but, as explained in the chapter on the history of the admission of the Press, the days of secrecy have gone by, and publicity in the full light of public opinion takes the place of mystery.





"AYE" DIVISION LOBBY, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The tellers stand at the end of the Lobby and count the number of members passing through.



"NO" DIVISION LOBBY, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

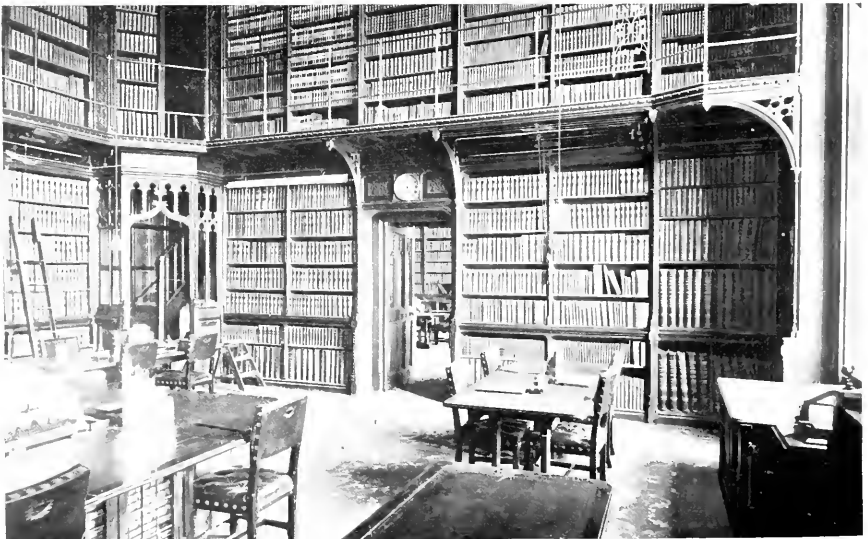
As members pass the desk their names are registered by clerks.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE LIBRARY.

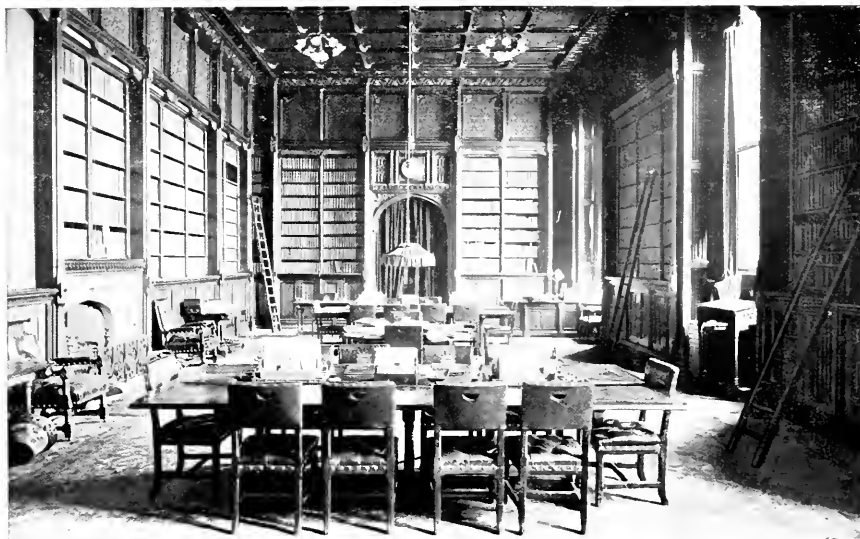
A FEATURE of the House of Commons little known outside, but keenly appreciated within, is the Library. Located in a fine suite of rooms on the main floor, overlooking the river, it is a favoured retreat of the more studious members, who find it possible to associate their legislative labours with a certain amount of literary or research work. There are many strange things about the Houses of Parliament; but perhaps the strangest is that until well into the nineteenth century the House had nothing which could be dignified by the name of Library. What the famous orators of other days, the Walpoles, the Pulteneys, and the Pitts, did without such an arsenal of fact at their elbows as a well-selected collection of books is, it is difficult now to imagine. Maybe in that period of political oratory there was little of real speech-preparing in the legislative precincts. The *tu quoque* line of political argument had then not attained to the high development it has since reached, and there was existing none of the oratorical material from which weapons could be fashioned to confuse and confute an opponent.

Whatever the cause of the neglect, it is an indubitable fact that, except in an informal, irregular fashion, no such institution as a Library existed until 1818. In that year it seems to have occurred to the House of Commons that it ought to provide some system by which members might consult Parliamentary papers and other works of reference. Its sense of its intellectual deficiency was stimulated by the fact, set forth in the preface to the first



THE LIBRARY (MAP-ROOM), HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A gallery runs round the room, from which a view of the Terrace is obtained.



THE LIBRARY, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

This room contains books of general reference and historical works.

catalogue, issued in 1830, that the books required for the use of Select Committees, consisting of Acts of Parliament and journals, sessional reports and papers, had accumulated in such quantity that they were not readily accessible. The plain need was for an official Librarian who would take charge of and classify such books as were already in the possession of the authorities, and deal with additions which might subsequently be made. Such a gentleman was found in the person of Mr. Benjamin Spiller, who held the appointment for a good many years. At the outset the Library was housed in a small room, known as "the Speaker's Chamber," some seventeen feet six inches long by sixteen feet nine inches wide. It was situated between Bellamy's coffee-room and the smoking-room, and, seeing the free and easy manners which then prevailed, it could not have been a very delectable place for the studious member. As much as this is to be gathered from the official literature on the subject; members seem to have been in the habit of dropping in from one or other of the resorts, bringing with them no doubt the atmosphere and manners of those establishments. Owing to this cause a Select Committee was appointed in 1825, and another a year later, to consider the question of providing more suitable accommodation. A proposal emanating from the latter of these bodies for the erection of a new Library was adopted, and in 1828 the building was ready for occupation. So greatly was it appreciated, that before the session was out the Government of the day felt constrained to bring forward a vote of £2,000 for the purchase of books for the establishment. The appetite of members grew on what it fed on. Before another year was out, like *Oliver Twist*, they were asking for "more." Again two successive Select Committees deliberated upon the question of perfecting the Library. The outcome of the deliberations was a report recommending additions to the collection of books, which was stated to be especially weak in works relating to law and history. There was certainly room for improvement, for at the time the entire library numbered only some 4,500 books, and many of these, no doubt the bulk, were official publications.

Certain additions to the stock were made in consequence of the Committee's findings, but the



JOSEPH HUME.

Who vigorously advocated Parliamentary and financial reform.

under the distinctive name of the "map-room." This suite of apartments would have satisfied the highest aspirations of the most ardent of bibliophilic members of the pre-Reform times. Ample in proportions, lofty and airy, and possessing, with the attractions of a delightful outlook, the advantages of quiet and seclusion, the Library constitutes perhaps the most desirable establishment of the kind there is in London.

In the daytime the rooms are the lightest part of the building. The large double windows are so made that perfect quietude is obtained; the temperature is kept in a suitable condition; specially designed seamless carpets prevent any noise in walking, and the thousands of books

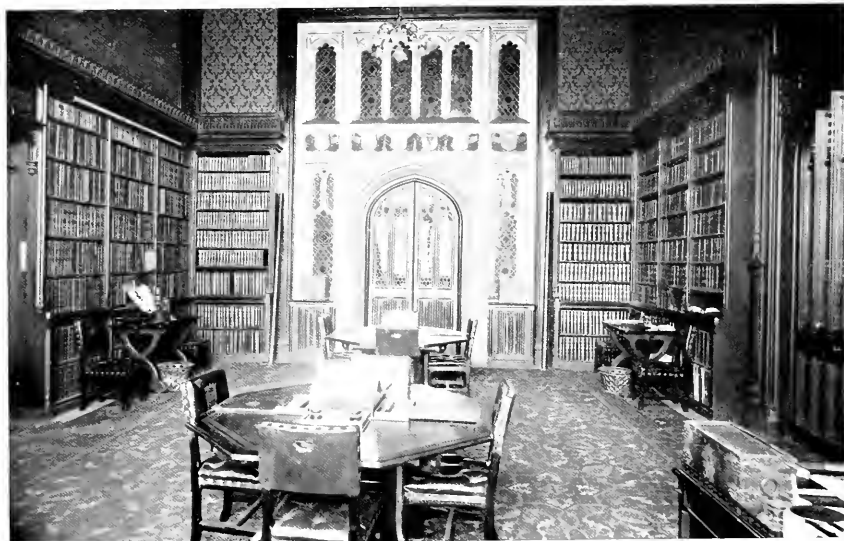
are so conveniently arranged that a new-comer examining the excellent catalogues can at once locate the particular work he is in search of. Not only Parliamentary and historical works of reference are kept, but rare editions of standard literature can be consulted, every book being handsomely bound. The Library is under the personal control of the Speaker, and the Librarian, Mr. Ralph C. Walpole, whose forebears for generations were connected with the House of Commons, had had a long experience of Parliamentary service in various departments of the House before receiving his present appointment.

Apart from its bibliographical contents, the Library is of special interest by reason of the fact that there are to be seen in its confines some curious relics of the past. Here, under a glass case, is exposed for the inspection of the visitor a long key, lugged in the centre, supposed to have been used by Guido Fawkes to obtain entrance to the vaults under the old House of Lords when he was engaged upon the infamous Gunpowder Plot. It was presented by the Rev. J. Beech, M.A., to the late Speaker (Mr. Peel), and by him placed in its present position. A more important exhibit is a



SIR THOMAS ERSKINE MAY, K.C.B. (LORD FARNBOROUGH).

For a long period clerk of the House of Commons.



THE LIBRARY, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

One of the quiet corners of the Library to which literary members resort to pursue their avocations.

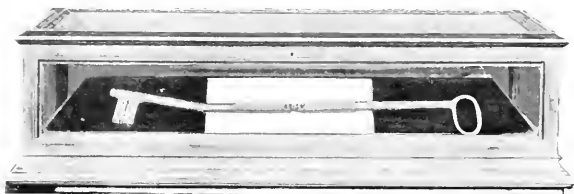
selection of the manuscript journals of the House dealing with the period of the Revolution. Three memorable episodes are chosen for illustration. First are shown the pages of the journal which were mutilated by James I. on December 18th, 1621, when, to show his contempt of the "Protestation" of the liberties of the House made twelve days earlier, he utterly annihilated the offending record. Next is displayed the journal entry concerning the attempted arrest of the five members on the benches of the House of Commons by Charles I. on January 4th, 1641-2. Finally there is open for inspection the page of the journal which marks the dispersion of the House of Commons by Oliver Cromwell on April 20th, 1652. Eloquent memorials these of times of stress and tribulation in the life of Parliament, and on that account of absorbing attractiveness. Not improbably the visitor who sees them will be led to take an interest in the great collection of records of which they form but a very small part, and for his behoof the erudite Sir Reginald Palgrave, the late Clerk of the House, has got together some salient facts which may be appropriately given here.

"The manuscript journals of the House of Commons," says this authority, "escaped the great fire of October, 1834, which destroyed a considerable portion of the ancient Palace of Westminster. These volumes range in series from the year 1547, the first year of the reign of King Edward VI., to the year 1800.

"A daily record of their proceedings is essential to the being of a Parliament, and the existence of journal books of the House of Commons before the year 1547 may be accepted as a certainty, even if evidence to that effect was not afforded by the statute of 6th Henry VIII., which enacted that those members of Parliament who absented themselves from Parliament without the licence of the Speaker of the House 'entered of record in the book of the Clerk of the Parliament appointed for the Commons, should be deprived of their wages.'

"The two first journal books, which contain the records of the House of Commons from the first year of King Edward VI. to the twenty-third year of Queen Elizabeth, were known to historical students of three hundred years ago as 'Seymour' and 'Onslow,' the names of the

clerks who sat, pen in hand, with those books before them on the table of the House; and that Seymour may claim to be the most ancient of the manuscript journals of the House of Commons is attested by evidence reaching back in time to the year 1641. The learned and



THE OLD KEY: A RELIC OF THE GUNPOWDER PLOT.

the most ancient that they have.' That the series of the manuscript journals should close with the volume which records the session of 1800 may be attributed, not to official neglect, but to what may be termed natural causes, to that inevitable and most useful resort to the printing press which increases more and more. . . .

"The manuscript journals of the House of Commons, strongly marked, especially in the earlier volumes, with a picturesque interest, possess no historical value, as they were published in a printed form more than a century ago. In the year 1742, acting on the report of a Select Committee, based on information supplied by Mr. Hardinge, the then Clerk of the House, the Commons ordered the printing of their journals from the commencement of the manuscript series, and of complete indexes thereto, both general and glossarial. The undertaking was entrusted to Mr. Richardson, then in the first bloom of 'Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded,' 'a printer in whose skill and integrity' Mr. Hardinge could 'confide.' The journals were printed in Roman letter upon 'fine English demy,' worth 15s. a ream; and the outlay thus commenced reached in the year 1825 a grand total of between £160,000 and £170,000."

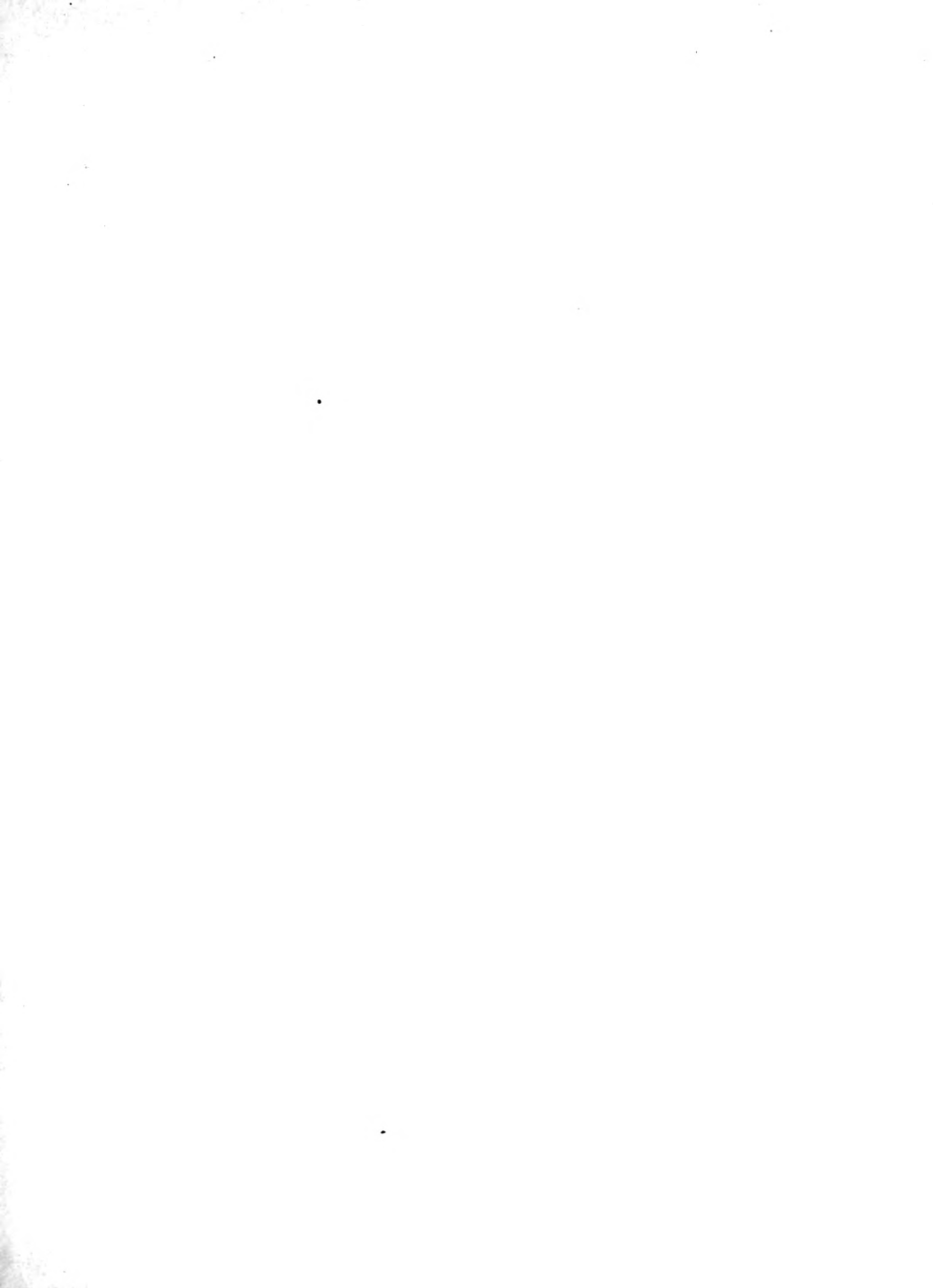
These references to the journals recall the circumstance that in the Library is perpetuated, by means of a bust, the memory of the late Sir T. Erskine May (Lord Farnborough), whose "History of Parliamentary Practice," based on a lifelong association with the records of the Parliamentary past and a career of many years at the table of the House, is the standard authority on all that concerns the work of Parliament. The memorial is particularly appropriate in the position it occupies, as it was as Assistant Librarian from 1831 to 1847 that this eminent official laid the foundations of that profound knowledge of the procedure of Parliament which he subsequently turned to such good account.

diligent Sir William Halewill, who in the year 1601 sat for the Cornish constituency of Bossiney, states in his book, 'The Manner how Statutes are enacted in Parliament,' published in 1641, that 'the volume containing the journals of the Commons House of Parliament for the first year of King Edward VI. is



THE MANUSCRIPT JOURNALS.

The actual records of three great events during the Stuart period.







## CHAPTER XXI.

### BELOW STAIRS AT ST. STEPHEN'S.

THOSE who only know the Houses of Parliament as visitors hardly realise how immense is the area devoted to what may be termed the domestic services of the two Houses. In what, familiarly speaking, may be called the basement of the Palace is quite a new world, peopled with officials and servants who never come into the blaze of the footlights, but who nevertheless play an important part in the staging of the great legislative drama. The heating, the lighting, and the ventilating arrangements of the vast building are all manipulated from here; and also on this level are the kitchens, the wine-cellars, and the other essential adjuncts of that social and festive side of Parliamentary life which has been sketched in earlier chapters. Only the very Old Parliamentary Hands on the staff know thoroughly this locality in all its many ramifications. It is a wondrous maze of passages and courts, murky apartments, and musty cellars and storerooms, bewildering in the multiplicity of its details, but an indispensable part of Barry's mighty plan.

On the morning of the opening day of every session there is a solemn function enacted in these nether regions of the Palace. From the Tower comes a detachment of Yeomen of the Guard in the full glory of their picturesque uniforms. Attended by the Deputy Great Chamberlain, the police and other officials, they make a close inspection of every nook and corner of the place with intent to discover whether any stray barrels of gunpowder or dynamite bombs have been surreptitiously placed there by evil-doers. Provided with lanterns and carrying halberds, the worthy Beefeaters make their tour, which usually lasts nearly two hours. It is terminated by a pleasant little ceremony, in which the Sovereign's health is drunk in a glass of good wine. This custom dates from the days of the first Bellamy, who



THE GUNPOWDER CONSPIRATORS.

From a print published immediately after the discovery of the plot.



AN ETCHING BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK,

Showing the conspirators excavating the tunnel from the house in Old Palace Yard rented by them prior to their obtaining possession of the cellar under the House of Lords, where the gunpowder was ultimately placed.

placed there. The Gunpowder Plot, as fascination it once had for the popular mind. But from the place it occupies in Parliamentary annals it merits more than a passing reference in a work of this description. The conspiracy had its origin in the penal legislation against Roman Catholics which followed the accession of James I. Brooding over the

kept a wonderful cellar of wines under the old House of Commons. The worthy Boniface would meet the inspecting party on its rounds and would invite them to sample the contents of the bottles by which they were surrounded. When the fire of 1834 drove Messrs. Bellamy's business out of the legislative precincts, first to the vaults beneath the Sessions House at Westminster, and afterwards to Parliament Street, the hospitable usage was not discontinued, as it might have been. The Yeomen were invited to the firm's new headquarters, and there each year since they have had their cake and wine and toasted their Sovereign with becoming enthusiasm.

It is, of course, to Guido Fawkes of infamous memory that we are indebted for this annual appearance of the Yeomen of the Guard at St. Stephen's. That historic conspirator so nearly succeeded on one memorable Fifth of November in blowing the estates of the realm in Parliament to the skies, that it was deemed necessary by the authorities to take the precaution of searching the vaults prior to the opening of every session, in order to preclude the possibility of explosives being it has ever been familiarly known, has not the conspiracy had its origin in the penal legislation against Roman Catholics which followed the wrongs inflicted upon their co-religionists, a trio of fanatics consisting of Robert Catesby, John Wright, and Thomas Winter conceived the idea of wreaking a terrible vengeance on the King and Parliament which had smothered them. Guido Fawkes was early initiated into the plot, as well as another staunch Roman Catholic named Thomas Percy. They both eagerly entered into the conspiracy, as did others who were at subsequent periods invited to join.

The first step towards the execution of the diabolical scheme was taken on May 24th, 1604, when Percy, acting under Catesby's instructions, hired a tenement at the south-east corner of Old Palace Yard, adjoining the House of Lords, the idea being to construct a mine to the vaults under that apartment. A meeting of the commissioners appointed to discuss the terms of the Union of England with Scotland temporarily deranged the conspirators' plans, and it was not until December 11th, 1604, that they found themselves in a position to commence operations. On that day, having laid in a store of provisions to save them from the necessity of going abroad, they started to excavate,



AN ETCHING BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANK,

Showing Guy Fawkes laying the train of gunpowder in readiness for the final act.

Their labours were from time to time interrupted by fancied sounds, the creation of their superstitious fears; but the work, nevertheless, proceeded steadily. For a fortnight the conspirators, reinforced by three kindred spirits, kept at their posts below ground, only Fawkes, who acted as sentinel, showing himself in public. About Christmas information was obtained that Parliament would not meet until October instead of in February, as was originally arranged; and consequently the work was suspended and the conspirators separated for a few weeks. When they again came together in February an incident occurred which greatly facilitated the execution of their designs. This was the renting from a coal-dealer named Bright of a cellar which was actually below the House of Lords. The acquisition of this place rendered the construction of the mine unnecessary, and so, abandoning the excavation, the conspirators proceeded to prepare more directly for the carrying out of their plot. Thirty-

my lord out of the love i beare ~~you~~ To some of youere friends  
i have acaer of youer preservation therfor i would  
advise youe as youe tender youer selfe to deuyse some  
excuse to shift of youer attendance at this parliament  
for god and man ha the concurred to punish the wickednes  
of this tyme and thinke not slightely of this aduertisement  
but rether youe self into youre contrivance youe  
may expect the event in jasti for howe the heare be no  
apparance of anni fur yet i saye they shall receve a terrible  
blowe this parliament and yet they shall not scie who  
hurtis them this counceel is not to be a contrived because  
it maye do youe good and can do youe no harme for the  
dangere is passed as soon as youe have burnt the letter  
and i hope god will give youe the grace to mak good  
use of it to whose holy protection i commend youe

To the right honorable  
The Lord Monteaale

FACSIMILE OF THE LETTER TO LORD MONTEAGLE,

The delivery of which resulted in the discovery of the plot.

six barrels of gunpowder were brought across from Lambeth and stored in the recesses of the cellar, and upon them were placed faggots and rubbish, so as to conceal the tell-tale store from prying eyes. By May all was in readiness for the fatal stroke, and once more the party separated. They met again at different times, and by Michaelmas the final arrangements had been made for the momentous day, which proved to be November 5th. Sir Everard Digby, Ambrose Rookwood, and Sir Francis Tresham, who had been brought into the conspiracy, were entrusted with the duty of providing armed men to second the efforts of the plotters after the explosion had occurred. Upon Fawkes devolved the dubious honour of firing the train by means of a slow match. It was contemplated that the fuse would burn fifteen minutes, sufficiently long to enable Fawkes to cross the river to Lambeth and make good his escape to the Continent with the good news of the punishment of the tyrants.



From photo by Thomas Lewis, Birmingham.

AN ARCH OF THE CELLAR UNDER THE OLD HOUSE OF LORDS IN WHICH THE GUNPOWDER WAS PLACED BY GUY FAWKES AND HIS BROTHER CONSPIRATORS.

The photograph is from the original arch re-erected in the Sir John Soane Museum.

accompanied on the occasion by Lord Montagu, aroused the suspicions of the conspirators, and Fawkes, on the evening of November 4th, went off to give the alarm to Percy. Returning at midnight to his post, he was arrested by Sir Thomas Knivett, a Westminster magistrate, who, with an armed force, was awaiting him. The murder was now out. It required only a brief examination of the cellar to discover the barrels of gunpowder, the slow match, and a dark lantern ready lighted for operations. Fawkes was promptly taken to Whitehall to the bedchamber of the King, where were assembled all the Lords of the Council, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Lord Admiral. Here, after orders had been given to make all doors fast, the prisoner was interrogated. Maintaining a defiant, almost a truculent, demeanour, he replied to the questions put to him with remarkable *sang-froid*. He declined to state who were his fellow-conspirators, and said that his only regret was that the explosion had not taken place. Asked by the King whether he did not regret his attack on the Royal Family, he observed that desperate diseases required dangerous remedies. A Scotch noble inquired why he had prepared so many barrels of gunpowder. "To blow Scotchmen back to Scotland," returned the imperturbable Fawkes. Perceiving that nothing was to be got out of the prisoner, the King committed him to the Tower. There other and more effectual means were adopted to secure the information required. Put to the torture of the rack, Fawkes broke down completely. He confessed everything, afterwards setting his trembling hand to the document

So far, everything promised well for the desperate venture, and there is small doubt that success would have crowned it, had not one or two of the conspirators almost at the last moment felt qualms of conscience at involving some of their friends in the general ruin which they destined for Parliament. The advisability of informing these of their danger was discussed, and it was agreed that, short of a specific warning, everything should be done to induce those for whom concern was felt to give the House of Lords a wide berth on the opening of Parliament. As an outcome of these deliberations, Lord Montagu received on October 26th a letter in a strange handwriting entreating him to absent himself from attendance on the King on November 5th. Perplexed at the mysterious terms of the communication, Lord Montagu repaired to Whitehall to the Earl of Salisbury, his Majesty's principal Secretary, whom he found in the company of the Lord Admiral, the Earl of Suffolk, the Earl of Worcester and Earl of Northampton, ready to go to supper, and then drew the Earl of Salisbury aside into another chamber and imparted to him the letter." The significance of the document was quickly recognised, and it was not long before the character of the plot was divined. But it was decided to make no arrests until the day before the meeting of Parliament, when the conspirators would have matured their plans. A preliminary search of the cellars by the Earl of Suffolk, who was ac-

upon which his statements were recorded. Subsequently, on January 27th, 1605-6, in company with six other conspirators, he was arraigned before a special commission on the charge of high treason in Westminster Hall, and condemned to death. Sir Everard Digby was afterwards brought to trial separately and condemned. On January 31st Fawkes, Winter, Rookwood, and Keyes were brought to Old Palace Yard, where, on a scaffold erected immediately opposite the scene of their crime, they were executed with the terrible accompaniments which were then associated with the traitor's doom. Thus closed an episode which has perhaps left a more vivid impression upon the popular imagination than any other event in Parliamentary history.

After this somewhat lengthy reference to the great plot, the memory of which is so curiously preserved in the ceremony of search by the Yeomen of the Guard, we may say something about the purely modern aspects of this Underground St. Stephen's. First and foremost to claim our notice are the arrangements for ventilation. These have from time to time provided the material for hot controversy. At the very outset there was serious trouble on the subject between Sir Charles Barry and Dr. Reid. The latter was specially appointed by the Government to deal with the ventilation of the building, and there was continual clashing between him and the great architect, who took umbrage, not without considerable justification, at the large independent powers conferred upon his rival. At length the work was completed at enormous cost and a lavish expenditure of the time and temper of all con-

*Guy Fawkes*

*Guy Fawkes*

THE SIGNATURE OF GUY FAWKES  
BEFORE AND AFTER TORTURE.



From a photo by Henry W. Taunt, Oxford. Augustin Rischgitz Collection.

OLD LANTERN PRESERVED IN THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD.

Reputed to be the identical lantern found in the possession of Guy Fawkes at the time of his arrest. It was presented to the University in 1641.

cerned. Since then the question has been a prolific source of bickering and dissension. In the House the system has been fiercely assailed, and outside it experts have agreed to differ as to the efficacy of the highly scientific system established. Committees have sat from time to time to consider the question in all its phases, and on their recommendation various changes have been made, with the result that the Parliamentary buildings have now perhaps the most elaborate and costly scheme of ventilation of any structure in the world. Perfect, however, it can hardly ever be, because of the enormous difficulties which have to be faced



EXECUTION OF SOME OF THE GUNPOWDER CONSPIRATORS AT TYBURN.

From a contemporary and somewhat fanciful Dutch print.

in the lowness of the site, the prolonged sittings of the Commons, and the fluctuating character of the attendance.

The first alteration made in Dr. Reid's scheme was carried through under Sir Goldsworthy Gurney's supervision in 1854. In that year the Victoria Tower and the Clock Tower, instead of being used, as hitherto, for taking in the fresh air, were put to service as upcast shafts for getting rid of the vitiated air, the fresh air supply being obtained from gratings in the courtyards of the building. This system, although an improvement, did not give complete satisfaction, and further investigations at different periods were made without remedying the evils complained of. Matters became so bad that one evening the late Lord Randolph Churchill induced the House of Commons to adjourn in the middle of a debate, as a protest against the foulness of the atmosphere. The result of investigations by experts was that the present system was adopted, an explanation of the main points of which, aided by the illustrations, will give a general idea of the trouble taken to purify the air.

One of the main improvements, suggested by Mr. William J. Prim, the resident engineer, who for many years had the ventilating and lighting arrangements under his care, was that the greater portion of the air for ventilating purposes should be taken in at the Terrace on the river side of the building. The system was adopted, and extending along the six hundred and eighty feet of Terrace frontage are thirty-five openings into a corresponding number of inlet air chambers. Into these chambers, which are provided with waterproof floors covered with lead, the air comes, and passes first through spray jets of water, and is then transmitted to various parts of the building. Certain of the air inlet chambers are devoted exclusively to the ventilation of the debating chamber of the House of Commons, the air passing along a special passage or gallery, the roof and walls of which are protected from the wash of the water issuing from the jets by screens of light open canvas, also forming a cooling surface with which the passing

air comes in contact. At the extremity of this passage the current of air during hot weather is brought in contact with ten or a dozen blocks of ice, each block averaging in weight about two hundredweight. The air, passing round and about these blocks of ice, becomes only slightly lowered in temperature—an excessively low temperature in hot weather not being desirable. After passing through the ice chamber, the air is drawn through a quickly revolving fan or air propeller, and discharged against a rough kind of filter, consisting of a wide screen of canvas, technically known as a "scrim," having an area of six hundred superficial feet. This large surface permits a free passage of air at a low velocity, and arrests any particles of dust or smuts that have passed through the propeller, should any have escaped precipitation of the water sprays. The scrim being passed, the air finds its way through openings provided with regulating doors or flaps into a chamber overhead, where, if necessary, the warming apparatus, consisting of rows of steam-heating batteries, is brought into play. But it may be asked, What about foggy weather? Sprays, ice, scrims, etc., are very well, but at Westminster the genuine London fog delights to settle. The fog filter here comes into action. The V-shaped filtering apparatus, consisting of two layers of cotton-wool, each three inches in thickness, is invaluable. The air is forced by means of the propelling fan through this bed of cotton-wool, and arrests and holds in suspension the heavy particles of the foggy vapour, while the pure air passes through the large area of the filtering surface. This interesting process, simple, yet very effective, practically keeps the fog at bay. Proof of its efficacy is to be found in the fact that the wool becomes



THE FIRE ALWAYS KEPT BURNING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CLOCK TOWER FOR THE PURPOSE OF VENTILATION.



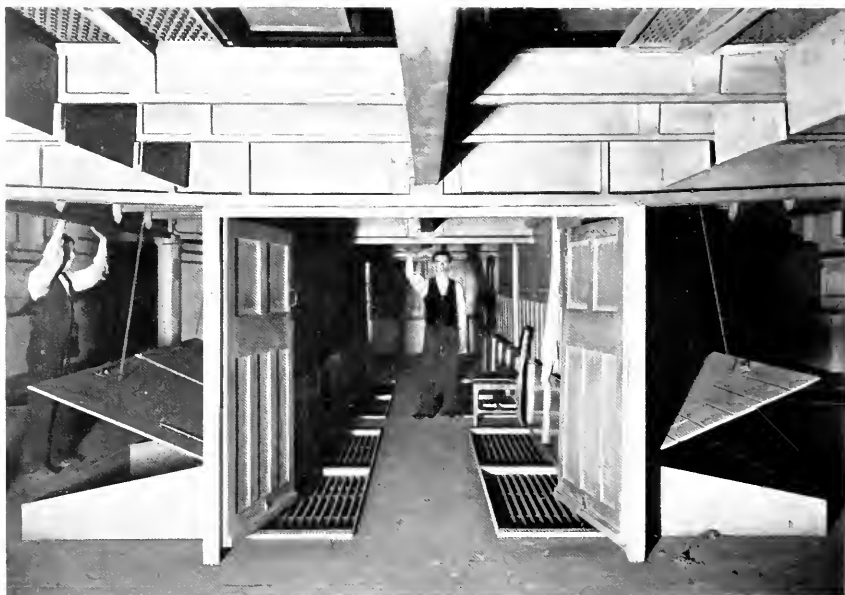
WOOL USED IN THE VENTILATION DEPARTMENT FOR FILTERING THE AIR.

On the right the wool is shown after being in use for twenty-four hours on a foggy day.

perfectly black after a heavy fog. But to resume: the pure air reaching the equalising chamber immediately below "the House"—an apartment corresponding exactly in size with the debating chamber—rises through the floor.

Now comes into play an ingenious arrangement for distributing the air. In the equalising chamber is constantly on duty during the sittings of the House an attendant whose duty is, as it were, to keep his finger on the legislative pulse. If there are signs of rising heat, the supply of cool air is increased by the turn of a

valve. Should there be crowding in any part of the House, an extra supply of air is sent through the floor at this particular point, and this without reducing the temperature. Even a sudden influx of members to hear a popular speaker or a rapid thinning of the House when business of special interest is completed receives attention. With the means at his command the attendant on duty is enabled to maintain an equable temperature throughout the whole area of the House. To such a nicety is the system regulated that it has been known that the spot occupied by a member in delicate health has had special attention bestowed upon it. The air in its upward course passes through the floor of the House, composed of perforated plates of cast-iron covered with a coarse netting of whip-cord, and the vitiated air finds an exit through the ceiling of the chamber. Thence it passes through flue tubes in connection with the gas-burners to the air shaft of the Clock Tower, where, with the aid of a strong



CHAMBERS FOR THE SUPPLY OF FRESH AIR UNDER THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

draught created by a huge furnace burning in the basement, it escapes through the top of the tower at the lantern chamber.

The House of Lords of course shares in all the warming and ventilating arrangements enjoyed by the Lower House. The general view under the Gilded Chamber embraces some of the features of that of the Commons, but necessarily less complex is the machinery employed in a part of the Legislature where all-night sittings are practically unknown.

The great steam boilers are in St. Stephen's Court, near the Central Tower, about mid-way between the two Houses. Here steam is supplied for general use. Besides the heating and ventilating, the kitchens have to be considered, steam and gas being used to a considerable extent in this department.

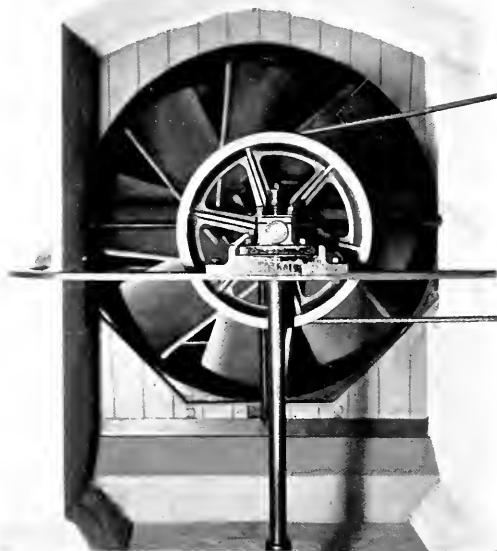
Under the Speaker's Green, near the Clock Tower, is placed the ejector sewage chamber. The system adopted is that known as the Shone hydro-pneumatic, and whatever ground there may have been in the past for complaint under different conditions, since the present pneumatic system has been in force no difficulty has been experienced in securing perfect drainage. In



a corner of the chamber a model of the ejector is placed, whereby the system in action can be seen. The engine employed for compressing the air for actuating the ejectors is a powerful specimen of its kind, and the view of the plant as driven by steam-engines shows the general plan of its construction.

Electric lighting is of course used to a large extent, but the current is chiefly supplied by an outside corporation, the principal cables coming into the building at the south end. The main switchboard is situated at the junction of the company's mains and those of the Houses of Parliament. The switches are designed to move in a circular direction only, so that each time after the current has been switched off, on the renewal of the contact the current becomes reversed, the cable which had been "positive" before the movement of the switch becoming "negative" afterwards. The general lighting of the halls, corridors, and rooms is controlled by the switches; but in certain cases, such as the suspended adjustable lamps over desks and writing-tables in the Ministers', reporters', secretaries', and clerks' rooms, supplementary switches are supplied for the use of the occupants, in order to enable them to obtain light when required and to extinguish the burners when no longer wanted without the intervention of the lighting attendant. In all cases, however, the current is controlled at the local switchboard.

Gas is the illuminant used in the Legislative Chamber, sixty-four double-ringed Argand burners being in action, a single light being placed in the centre of each of the horizontal ground glass panels of the ceiling. The light is reflected downwards by means of iron concave reflectors painted with "zinc white," while the products of combustion from each burner are carried away through an iron pipe and discharged into the uptake of a ventilating furnace over the Lobby of the House of Commons. Immediately over the gas-burner and between it and the flue-pipe is a short chimney of clear, well-annealed glass, to enable the entire frame to be utilised. Beneath each of the glass panels a fine wire is placed to prevent accident from falling glass should a panel become accidentally cracked. All the framework of the ceiling is coated with asbestos paint, and every precaution is taken to avoid fire. The consumption of gas in each burner is twenty-one cubic feet per hour. As the centre of the flame from the burners rises several inches above the ceiling beams, considerable shadows would ordinarily be thrown upon the panels forming the slope of the roof through which no light passes. In order to prevent this, pendants project into the chamber, each having suspended from its lower end a reflector and, concealed from view, a small gas-ring burner. No products whatever from the gas-lights are allowed to enter the chamber, while the heat from the ceiling does not in any way affect the temperature beneath. The effect produced by these lighting arrangements within the debating chamber is extremely satisfactory, a soft and mellow light being



BIG FAN EXHAUSTER, VENTILATING DEPARTMENT.  
A feature of the elaborate machinery utilised for the ventilation of the Houses of Parliament.

diffused in every part. Beneath the galleries, which extend the whole length and width of the chamber, small lights are placed in order that the general lighting from overhead may not cast a shadow upon the back rows of the members' seats. These lights are out of view from the body of the House.

From what has been stated it will be gathered that a highly complicated organisation has its home in the lower regions of the Houses of Parliament, and that legislators owe much of the health and comfort which they enjoy in the daily discharge of their duties to the assiduity and skill of the permanent engineering staff in the working of the arrangements. Criticisms have often been passed upon some of the features of the ventilating machinery, and even the efficacy of the system itself has been called in question. But there is every reason to believe that, having regard to the natural difficulties presented by the lowness of the situation of the Houses of Parliament, a real scientific success has been achieved by those to whom the work has been entrusted. Certainly there is no other great building in the world upon the ventilation of which so much painstaking care has been bestowed.



ELECTRIC SWITCHES UNDER THE HOUSE OF LORDS.



THE RADIATORS UNDER THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CLOCK TOWER AND BIG BEN.

THE Clock Tower of the Houses of Parliament is to-day the most familiar landmark in Westminster; but though modern in construction, it is the representative of hoary traditions. For more than five centuries a clock tower looked out on the great world which centred at the Palace of Westminster, and to it generations of Londoners turned as to an institution charged with invaluable functions in a day when public clocks were of extreme rarity and watches were practically unknown. It is to be seen in Hollar's drawing of New Palace Yard—a square massive structure, rising in the centre of and high above the line of low buildings which formed the eastern side of the space. The exact site is not now easy to determine; but we shall not be far wrong if we assume that it stood at the Parliament Street end of the ground now occupied by Parliament Chambers.

A curious and, it is believed, true story is associated with the foundation of this ancient clochard. According to the chroniclers, it had its origin in an episode in which Sir Ralph Heigham, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, figured to his disadvantage. This judge altered a court record with intent to relieve a poor man of a part of his liability, and the circumstance becoming known, he was fined eight hundred marks by the King for so grave a lapse from the path of judicial duty. The money, by one of those whimsical impulses which marked the careers of our mediæval Solons, was applied to the erection of a tower to accommodate a clock, the bell of which, striking the hours, would be an ever-present reminder to the judges in the adjacent Courts "to indifferently administer justice." In order to give greater point to the lesson conveyed, the dial bore the legend, "*Discite justitiam moniti.*" That the legend associated with the Clock Tower was cherished long after the erring Heigham had passed away is shown by an anecdote related of two Elizabethan judges. Some matter had come before them in which an alteration of the records was involved. One was inclined to favour the change proposed, whereupon the other demurred with the observation, "Brother, I have no mind to build a new clock tower."

It is stated by some authorities that this Westminster clock was the first public clock erected in England; but there is reason to think that some of the cathedrals have prior claims to the honour of introducing to the commonalty the mechanism of a striking clock. Unquestionably, however, the Westminster clock was a very early and interesting example of horological science.



OLD CLOCK TOWER, WESTMINSTER, FROM HOLLAR'S DRAWING OF NEW PALACE YARD.

The ancient prototype of the present Clock Tower. In it was hung the famous bell known as "Great Tom of Westminster."

It had a bell of great size, whose sonorous tones could be heard as far as the City when the wind was in the right direction. First dubbed "Edward" in compliment to the Confessor, it after the Reformation became familiarly known by the name of "Great Tom," in allusion, it is conjectured, to the depth of its note. For centuries the bell tolled forth the hours and filled a place in the popular affections. A singular story associated with it is that of the sentry on duty at Windsor Castle during the reign of William III. who, charged with sleeping at his post, saved himself by the defence that he heard the clock strike thirteen instead of twelve. According to the statements published at the time of the man's death, the assertion is to the wrong striking of the clock was at first dis-believed by the Court owing to the great distance which the sound had to travel; but after his condemnation by the court-martial several reputable persons came forward and made affidavits to the effect that the clock did actually strike thirteen, whereupon the King granted a free pardon to the prisoner.



GALLERY OVER CLOCK FACE, BIG BEN.

The figures photographed in the picture supply a means of gauging the size of the architectural ornaments, which appear very small from the ground level.

The aberration of the clock thus celebrated indicates that it had with the lapse of age become decrepit. Colour is lent to this theory by a transaction carried through on August 1st, 1698, by which the Vestry of St. Margaret's, Westminster, received a grant of the clochard under the Privy Seal, with the right, apparently, to dispose of it as they deemed best. Some little time afterwards the old tower was pulled down under the direction of Sir Christopher Wren, and the bell was transferred to St. Paul's, with the intent that it should have a place in the great building then approaching completion. Its immense weight—it scaled 82 cwt. 2 qrs. 21 lb.—made the removal over the indifferent roads with the means then available a matter of great difficulty. All went well until it reached Temple Bar, when a sudden lurch of the carriage brought the great piece of metal violently to the ground, irremediably injuring it. The bell was recast in 1716 by Whitman, and, after remaining for some years in a shed in the Cathedral Yard, was hoisted to its position in the Western Tower, from whence its deep



*From a photo by W. S. Campbell. Copyright, Hutchinson & Co.*

**THE CLOCK TOWER, FROM THE ROOF OF WESTMINSTER HALL.**

The view from this position is one of the most striking that is obtainable.



THE TOP OF THE CLOCK TOWER.

notes now sound out upon London. The clock disappeared—whence no one knows. Most probably it was relegated to the rubbish-heap, as many other interesting relics of old London have been since.

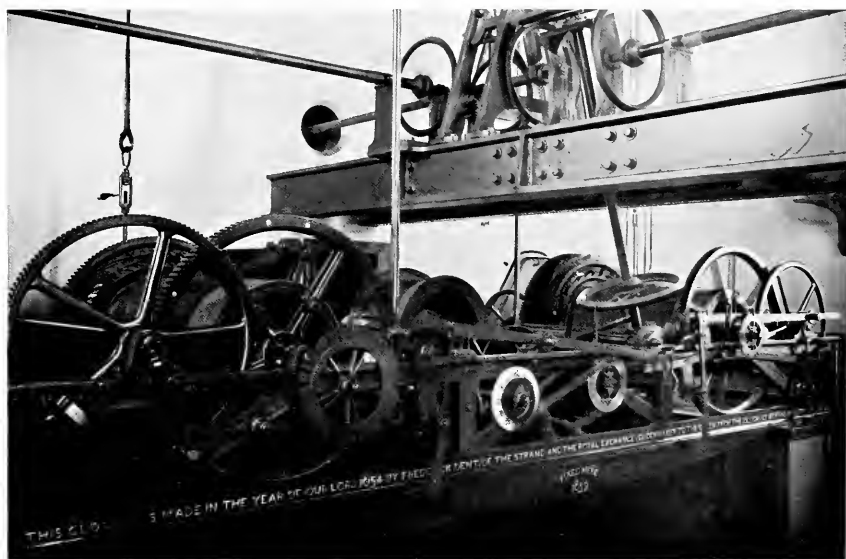
When Barry drew up his plans for the new Palace of Westminster, he very happily revived the memory of Westminster's ancient institution by making a clock-tower a leading feature of his design. He attached much importance to the structure, and devoted especial pains to its construction. In the result we have the stately edifice soaring in its solid majesty more than three hundred feet above the river. The tower is best seen by the spectator when he approaches it from the Surrey side of Westminster Bridge. From that point it stands out in bold outline, its imposing appearance giving the impression of a greater altitude than it really possesses. At the base of the tower burns a fire for the purpose of creating a draught in the ventilating shaft which runs up the building. At a slightly higher elevation, on a level with Bridge Street, are the apartments which constitute the Parliamentary prison. Of this institution and its occasional occupants we shall have something to say later. Meanwhile, it is sufficient to state that, as prisons go, the place is comfortable enough; but prisoners are sadly disturbed by the striking of the great clock, the bells of which produce a particularly disagreeable vibration.

As perhaps becomes its position as one of the principal clocks in the world, the great clock of Westminster was cradled in strife. About it raged for years a fierce controversy—or, rather, controversies, for there were a series of them—which engaged the close attention of the Ministry of the day and even of Parliament itself. The history of the struggle as related in the voluminous Parliamentary papers is not without interest, and occasionally amusement, for the public of to-day. The personalities which were freely exchanged between the contending parties are reminiscent rather of Eatonsville than of Westminster; the moods in which the contesting parties are shown are characteristic more of the

lounge than of the workshop or of the Senate House. Viewed now from the calm vantage-

ground of the historical investigator, they excite wonder that such heat should have been engendered over so prosaic and business-like a matter.

At the outset the disputation was as to who should make the clock. Barry favoured Mr. Vulliamy, the clockmaker to the Queen, the constructor of the Windsor Castle clock, and the descendant of a race of tradesmen who had basked in the sun of Royal favour in unbroken line from the reign of George II. Mr. G. B. Airy, the Astronomer-Royal, supported the interests of Mr. Dent, chronometer-maker of the Strand, the designer of the Royal Exchange clock, which he asserted was "the best public clock in the world." A third Richmond appeared in the field in the person of Mr. Whitehurst, of Derby, described as "a man of reputation in the North of England, and known as the inventor of the 'Watchman's clock.'" Mr. Vulliamy had the advantage of the start. He was asked by Barry to prepare plans and specifications of a suitable clock, and he did so in the full expectation that the work of construction would



BIG BEN: THE CLOCK WORKS.

In the perfection of its mechanism the clock stands high amongst the great clocks of the world, if, indeed, it is not at the very head.

come to him. But he was soon undeceived on this point. An intimation was conveyed to him that there would be a competition for the honour, and that the Astronomer-Royal would be the referee. This was enough for the independent old clockmaker, who is stated by Mr. Airy, in one of his official communications, with some truth, to have had an "unmanageable temper." He wrote promptly declining to enter into any competition, partly on general grounds, partly because he objected to the appointment of the Astronomer-Royal as sole referee—that gentleman having "shown himself to be strongly prejudiced in favour of an individual known for many years as an eminent maker of marine chronometers, but who has only within the last three years turned his attention to making public clocks."

Mr. Vulliamy's retirement left Mr. Dent and Mr. Whitehurst face to face. But there was never any serious rivalry between the two. Aided by the Astronomer-Royal's powerful patronage, and further assisted by the extreme lowness of his estimate—£1,500—Mr. Dent had things practically his own way. Before, however, the business was closed, an incident occurred

which went near causing his withdrawal from the scene. This was the giving out of orders for some of the smaller clocks in the Palace to Mr. Vulliamy. In indignation at the recognition of his rival he intimated his intention to retire from the competition. Finally an assurance was given him that no further favours should be bestowed on Mr. Vulliamy, and, satisfied with the pledge, he once more entered the arena, to receive eventually his reward in the shape of the contract for the construction of the clock.

Now commenced another and sharper controversy relative to the clock. Before the contract was finally given out in 1852, the Government had associated with the Astronomer-Royal as referee Mr. Edmund Beckett Denison (the present Lord Grimthorpe). This gentleman had given a profound study to the subject of clockmaking, and had acquired a knowledge of the mechanical side of the question not inferior to that of the professional expert. To these practical gifts he added a very pretty facility for vigorous controversy. A spade in his eyes was a spade, and such he was wont to call it. His fighting instincts, as well as his technical lore, were called into play soon after he had entered upon the scene as an associate of Mr. Airy. The cause of

offence was a memorial presented by the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers expressing surprise that the order for the clock had been given direct to Mr. Dent under the immediate direction of the Astronomer-Royal and Mr. Edward Beckett Denison, a barrister, in place of submitting it, as was originally intended, to competition. An attack was made on Mr. Dent's reputation in the memorial, and there was also a sharp thrust at Mr. Denison, whose competence to judge in such a matter was impugned, and who was charged with engineering an "extravagant puff" of himself in



THE MECHANISM FOR STRIKING BIG BEN.

Though the arrangements are extremely complicated, they very rarely get out of order.

connection with the Crystal Palace clock, the design of which A reply was forthcoming from Mr. Denison couched in very plain language. It was the plainer because—as a result, it seemed, of the memorial—an additional referee had been appointed in the person of a Mr. Stephenson. Mr. Vulliamy was singled out as the instigator of the memorial, and to show his animus a remark of his was cited to the effect that “Mr. Dent will never make that clock.” Scornful reference was made to the capacities of the memorialists to judge clocks as illustrated by a eulogy of the thirty-hour clock at the Hôtel de Ville, Paris, and they were told that if ever they examined that clock at all “they do not at this moment understand either the nature or the object of its construction.” As for the additional referee, Mr. Denison flatly declined to act with him, and he told Lord John Manners (who had succeeded to the First Commissionership of Works) that “there was no power now existing in anybody to subject Mr. Dent to the control of any other persons, besides those to whom he is subjected by his contract.” Retorts, by no means all of the courteous order, followed, and for months the fiery controversy raged. Before it quite died out new conditions arose, and with them fresh matter for dispute. First came the death of Mr. Dent, bringing in its train a legacy of legal difficulties with reference to the contract, which were only settled after prolonged correspondence and a reference to the Law Officers of



the Crown. Then followed a sage discussion amongst the pundits of the Treasury as to whether the contractor for the clock was entitled to be paid his charges at the time agreed upon despite the fact that owing to the delay in building the tower the condition precedent stipulated—that the clock should be fixed and completed in February, 1854—had not been fulfilled. Close upon this controversy came a rupture between Mr. Airy and Mr. Beckett Denison, culminating, after a brisk correspondence, in the resignation of the former.

Meanwhile, a constant battle was proceeding between the clockmakers and Mr. Denison on the one hand, and Sir Charles Barry and the Office of Works on the other, as to the structural features of the tower, and the exact rights of the former to be consulted upon them. When this had been settled after a fashion, difficulties arose over the construction of the hands. They were first made of cast-iron, and proved too heavy to be put up. Afterwards, when lighter ones of gun-metal had been made, they were so fixed that they fell over a minute or two every time after they passed the vertical.

The last, in some respects the greatest, trouble was appropriately over the big bell. There was an acrimonious correspondence as to who should cast this adjunct of the clock and who should superintend the work, and when these points had been settled

and "Big Ben"—so named after Sir Benjamin Hall, First Commissioner of Works—had been created, other and more practical worries had to be faced. Brought by sea from the manufactory of Messrs. Warner, the bell-founders, at Stockton-on-Tees, the bell very narrowly escaped finding a resting-place on the ocean bed, owing to a severe storm which overtook the vessel on which it was embarked. When at length it reached London and had been hung for testing purposes at the foot of the Clock Tower in Palace Yard, the discovery was made that, in casting, the bell absorbed two tons more metal than had been calculated, and therefore required



INSIDE THE CLOCK FACE, BIG BEN.

The view conveys some notion of the immense size of the clock face.



INSIDE THE LANTERN, BIG BEN.

a clapper twice as heavy as that provided. Day after day Londoners were edified by the clang of "Big Ben," and excitement prevailed in the neighbourhood of Westminster. Crowds were admitted to see the monster bell, and discussions took place among musical experts as to whether the tone of it was true or not. At length, after some months' trial, the question was set at rest by the cracking of the bell. Upon examination a fault in the casting was discovered, a spot where two streams of metal, which should have met, had never joined. So "Big Ben" the first was discarded, to be recast by Messrs. Mears, of Whitechapel. But the chapter of accidents was not to end yet. After the casting operation a flaw revealed itself in the metal. This seemed likely to make another casting necessary, but it was eventually found possible by cutting out a piece of metal to remedy the defects. The renovated bell was at last hoisted to its perch in the tower, and there it has remained for forty-three years sounding with its deep boom the hours, with only an occasional few days' break, brought

about by storms or the necessity of carrying out repairs to the clock. The bell weighs thirteen and a half tons, and the striking clapper weighs seven hundredweight. The four quarter-chime bells together make nearly eight and a half tons of metal.

The internal arrangements of the Clock Tower merit notice for the ingenuity with which the architectural features have been made to subserve the purposes of the clock. Reached by a winding staircase of three hundred and seventy-four steps is an inner gallery which runs round the inside of the four huge opal glass clock faces, each of which is twenty-three feet in diameter. At the back ordinary gas brackets project from the wall, the illumination of the dials by gas-light being considered preferable to electricity, this illuminant possessing the advantage of keeping the atmosphere warm round the clock works. The minute hand of each dial is fourteen feet long, and weigh about two hundredweight. The figures are two feet long, and the minute spaces each measure a foot square.

Enclosed by the four walls behind the dials, the clock-room fills up a considerable space. Here all is perfectly clean and orderly, the monster works going smoothly and with little sound. So careful are the authorities to ensure perfect accuracy in the time kept, that twice a day the ruling of the clock is automatically telegraphed to Greenwich Observatory in order to enable the performance of the instrument to be checked. The pendulum is not touched unless an error of two seconds is discovered, and this is not a very frequent occurrence. The pendulum, which hangs in a chamber of sheet iron as a protection against wind influence, is thirteen feet long, and beats two seconds. The bob of the pendulum weighs four hundredweight. The weights of the clock weigh nearly two and a half tons, and fall about one hundred and seventy-five feet. The laborious task of winding up the great clock is performed by two men, who three times a week spend five hours in the clock-room. None of the various suggestions for winding by other means than manual labour have yet met with approval.

Above the clock dials is an open gallery which affords a fine view for miles round. The northern heights and the Surrey hills stand out clearly. The Thames Valley is well defined,

and the river itself seen from this spot shows the windings scarcely appreciated when travelling upon the surface level. Close by, the parks contrast pleasantly with the mass of buildings eastward. The river bridges, the embankments and approaches to them, all crowded with moving traffic, are seen with peculiar fascination from the lofty spot, while a good idea of the full life and bustle of the western London streets is also obtainable. The grand old Abbey quite close stands isolated, and seems small compared with the actual space occupied, and, looking immediately down, the whole plan and arrangement of the Houses of Parliament is seen in all its completeness. Finally, on the southern side the visitor has a pretty view of St. Thomas's Hospital and of the Albert Embankment.

In the belfry behind the gallery swings "Big Ben" and the four quarter-bells, and reached by a ladder going still higher is the monster lantern signal-light always kept burning after dark when the House of Commons is at work. For many years a lantern of a different construction,

situated slightly higher than the present one, was in use. This light only shed its effulgence over West London, a display of partiality which in course of time gave rise to a considerable amount of dissatisfaction. So great was the discontent of members who had the misfortune to live in South, East, or North London, that the Government deemed it politic to make the change to the present system of lighting, which treats all points of the compass on an equal footing. The illuminating apparatus is a lantern nine feet in diameter and twelve feet high, standing in the centre of an iron chamber situated about two hundred and fifty feet from the ground. It is equipped with a dioptric apparatus, a refracting belt of polished glass, and a Wigham light-house sixty-eight-jet burner. The jets are so placed with regard to each other that, when drawn into shape by the overhanging flue with a tale terminal, they



"BIG BEN."

The famous bell upon which the hours of the great Westminster clock are struck. It weighs thirteen and a half tons.

produce a solid mass of flame, consuming about two hundred and forty cubic feet of gas an hour, with illuminating power of two thousand four hundred candles. The naked flames from the burners fall without interruption upon every portion of the surface of the dioptric apparatus, and the whole is within the substantially constructed glazed lantern. The body of the light is so powerful that on being thrown through the openings between the stanchions supporting the spire, the principal supports or the four corners of the tower do not seriously intercept the rays, but allow a beam of light to be diffused throughout the entire circle. Mechanical arrangements are in force for regulating the quantity of gas in use according to the atmospheric conditions, and a clockwork mechanism is attached to impart flashes to the light if required.



THE BELFRY.

Showing a portion of "Big Ben" and the sandler bells upon which the quarters are struck.

Although, like the clock, the signal is lighted by a man ascending the tower, a lever, situated in the ventilating chamber immediately beneath the floor of the House of Commons, is used for extinguishing the light directly the Speaker vacates his chair at the adjournment of the House.

Taking it as a whole, the Clock Tower is one of the most interesting features of the modern Palace of Westminster. Now that the bitter controversies which attended the raising and equipment of this structure have died away, we can without prejudice or partisanship admire the beauty of Barry's architecture and the practical value of Lord Grimthorpe's work upon the clock, which is not only one of the largest timepieces in the world, but is also one of the finest in a mechanical sense.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *THE CRYPT CHAPEL AND CLOISTERS AND THE JEWEL TOWER.*

"A POEM in stone" is the enthusiastic description applied by one writer to the beautiful little structure beneath St. Stephen's Hall which, anciently styled St. Mary-in-the-Vaults, is familiarly known at the present day as the Crypt Chapel.<sup>1</sup> The term is not misapplied. Amongst minor ecclesiastical buildings in the country there is none which embodies in a higher degree the sentiment of architecture. Built in the thirteenth century, in the heyday of Gothic art, it combines with perfect proportions the most exquisite beauty of decorative detail. Its clustering masses of carved stone-work, gorgeous in their prodigality of detail, its windows filled with delicate tracery, its complete harmony of style—these give to the chapel a charm and a grace which do not fail to strike the least impressionable of visitors.



A SECTION OF THE CRYPT CHAPEL,

Showing the entrance and one of the most elaborate portions of the beautiful stone-work.

It is characteristic of the indifference and neglect of ancient monuments and works of art which prevailed during the Georgian period that this magnificent example of decorated Gothic work was profaned by being put to the basest service. Difficult as it is to credit the

<sup>1</sup> A picture of the Crypt Chapel as it now is will be found on page 7 of the Introduction.



FONT IN THE CRYPT CHAPEL,

Last used at the christening of one of the present Speaker's grandchildren.

an important section of the adjacent cloisters it emerged practically uninjured. Fortunately, the circumstances which made it imperative to remove the old walls of St. Stephen's Chapel above did not operate here. Sir Charles Barry found it possible to build upon the old work, and his son, Mr. E. M. Barry, R.A., by restoring it where it needed restoration, and adding to it where an extension was suggested in the interest of harmony, assisted to revive in some degree the ancient glories of this portion of the old Palace. Most of the alterations were made in the upper cloisters, now used as a members' cloak-room. These were practically rebuilt, but so carefully was the work done that a visitor would probably not detect any material difference between the two sections of the structure.

While the work of restoration was being carried out in 1852, the workmen came upon the remains of an ecclesiastic embedded in the masonry of the north wall of the crypt. The body, from its position on the right hand of the altar, and from the fact that a pastoral cross was buried with it, was supposed to be that of some high dignitary of the Church. A suggestion made at the time was that the remains were those of William Lyndwoode, Bishop of St. David's and Keeper of the Privy Seal, who founded a chantry in the Chapel of St.

vandalism which could sanction such a procedure, it is an undoubted fact that for a great many years it was used as a coal-cellar and a lumber-room. In this humiliating condition it might have remained had not accommodation been required for Lord Walpole when appointed Auditor of the Exchequer about the middle of the eighteenth century. It was then cleared out, refurbished and decorated, and devoted to the purposes of a domestic apartment. Subsequently, during the occupancy of the Chair by Mr. Addington (afterwards Lord Sidmouth), it was by vote of the House given over to the Speaker, with adjacent portions of the old Palace, for an official residence. Its graceful proportions and fine architectural embellishments suggested its appropriation as a State dining-room, and to this purpose it was devoted for many years. During the period that the chapel and cloisters were in domestic occupation, they were shamefully treated. "Whilst the latter were partly fitted for the appendages of a kitchen, for servants' offices, and the most menial purposes, the area was occupied by a large shed-like kitchen; part of the exquisite lower oratory was converted into a scullery, and chimneys, sinks, and closets were cut into or hacked away without the least regard either to the stability of the edifice or its architectural character."<sup>1</sup>

The fire of 1834, which cleared off the flimsy accretions of the old Palace like so much matchwood, raged about the massive Norman masonry of the chapel in vain. With

<sup>1</sup> Brayley and Britton's "Ancient Palace of Westminster."

Stephen by deed, and died in 1446. This view is supported by a passage in the patent roll of 32 Henry IV., m. 4, which sets forth the terms of a licence, dated July 19th, from the King to "Robert Pyke, clerk, and Adrian Grenebough, executors of Wm. Lyndwoode, lately Bishop of St. David's and Keeper of the Privy Seal, for the foundation of a perpetual chantry in the Under-Chapel of St. Stephen, within the King's Palace of Westminster, for two perpetual chaplains, or at least for one perpetual chaplain, to celebrate Divine service daily in the aforesaid chapel, or one of them in the under-chapel (St. Mary's), and the other at the Chapel of St. Mary de la Pien, situated near the King's said Chapel of St. Stephen, for the healthful estate of the King and his Consort Margaret, Queen of England, and their souls when they shall die; and also for the soul of the aforesaid Bishop, whose body lies buried in the said under-chapel."

Whether the body was actually that of the Bishop of St. David's or not, certain it is that the chapel was used as a place of sepulture, and not in an isolated case, either. It



THE CLOISTERS, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The clock which is seen on the right of the picture was saved from the fire of the Houses of Parliament in 1834.

follows, therefore, that the appropriation of the building to secular uses was a desecration which ought not to have been tolerated. Animated by a spirit of greater reverence, the authorities to-day have appropriated the beautiful structure to the purposes of a private chapel for the Speaker. Occasional services of a special character are held in the building, as, for example, when recently the christening of a grandchild of the present Speaker was performed there.

Associated with the Crypt Chapel, and architecturally in harmony with it, is a beautiful little chamber known familiarly as the "Oratory." Originally a chantry chapel built by some pious mediæval benefactor of St. Stephen's, it has gone through many vicissitudes. One of the most interesting of its traditions assigns to it the dubious honour of being the place in which the death warrant of Charles I. was signed. But considerable doubt has been cast upon this story by historical investigators, who have taken the trouble to trace the circumstances under which the fatal document was signed. According to the evidence of a witness named Ewer, who appeared at the trial of Henry Marten, the signatures were appended in the

Painted Chamber, and it was there that occurred the ill-timed horseplay between Cromwell and Marten, during which the two inked each other's faces with the pens with which they wrote their names. Other testimony goes to show that several signatures were inscribed subsequently at Challoner's house in Clerkenwell. The probability is that after the first signing additional names were introduced to widen the sphere of responsibility, and that some of these were appended to the warrant in the Oratory as well as at Challoner's house. The chamber, however, stands in need of no adventitious aid, such as a picturesque story like this supplies to recommend it to notice. It is an architectural gem of the purest water, and as such will always attract the attention of all lovers of beauty.

Even older than the crypt and the cloisters, though without any pretensions to the architectural interest with which those portions of the ancient Palace are invested, is the structure known as the Jewel Tower. Tucked away behind the buildings in Old Palace Yard, facing the House of Lords, it easily escapes notice. Indeed, comparatively few people know of its existence. Yet it is, next to the Abbey and Westminster Hall, historically the most interesting building in this locality, for it is the sole portion of the ancient Palace of West-

minster that has come down to us in practically its original form. Walcott speaks of it as of "the age of William Rufus," but Sir Gilbert Scott places it somewhat later—in the reign of Richard II. Whatever the precise date of the structure, its exceptional antiquity is beyond question, for there are records extant which show that in 1377 it was granted by the abbot and convent, with a small close adjoining it, to Edward III. It was used by that monarch as a repository for the State jewels, and it then received the name which is used to designate it to the present day. In its character of treasure house it was the witness of some strange incidents. But these do not come within the scope of the present narrative. Architecturally the tower has many points of interest. "The walls," says Sir Gilbert Scott, "are perfect, even to the parapets, and the original doorways remain, their heads being of the form called the shouldered arch, so much used in domestic work throughout the Middle Ages, from the twelfth century to the fifteenth. . . . A modern vault has been introduced over



THE ORATORY.

It is traditionally stated that in this chamber some of the signatures were appended to the death warrant of Charles I.



the first floor room, probably as a security against fire, this room having had originally a wooden ceiling; but fortunately the ground rooms have been preserved intact, with their original ground vaults, with moulded ribs and carved bosses—evidently a part of the same work as the cloisters and other vaulted sub-structures of Abbot Littlington."

After serving for many years the purposes of a treasure chamber, it was turned over to the Government authorities for the storage of records, and came to be known as the Parliament Chamber. It was the depository of the legislative archives until the construction of the mighty Victoria Tower had by furnished a muniment chamber more fitted to the needs of the Imperial Legislature. But, as Dean Stanley aptly says, the grey fortress still remains, and, with the Treasury and Chapter House, forms the triple link of the English State and Church with the venerable past. "Comparing the concentration of English historical edifices at Westminster with those at Rome under the Capitol, as the Temple of Saturn finds its likeness in the Treasury and the Temple of Concord (where the Senate assembled) in the Chapter House and refectory, so the massive walls of the Tabularium, where the decrees of the Senate were carefully guarded, correspond to the square tower of the Parliament Office, overlooking the garden of the precincts from which it has long been parted."

During the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament after the fire of 1834, the tower formed part of the Speaker's residence, and in 1866 came into the possession of the Department of the Board of Trade, and is now used as part of the Government Standards Weights and Measures Office. An interesting account of the standards and their connection with



THE JEWEL TOWER,

The oldest existing portion of the ancient Palace of Westminster. It probably dates back eight centuries.



THE OLD STANDARDS, JEWEL TOWER.

Some of the ancient measures preserved by the Standards Department in the Tower.

Parliament is given by Mr. Henry J. Chaney in his recent work,<sup>1</sup> from which we learn that until Queen Elizabeth's time the standards in use had been those of Henry VII. The legal standards made by Elizabeth continued down to 1824, when a uniform system of weights and measures was introduced by legislation, the outcome of the reports of various Parliamentary inquiries extending over a period of sixty years. In 1825, under the advice of various scientific authorities, brass copies of the new Imperial standards were made and deposited at the office of the Exchequer. They became known as the "Exchequer standards," and are now included in those of the Board of Trade. They had been in the custody of the Clerk of the House of Commons in accordance with a resolution of the House of 1758; but these standards did not escape the ravages of the fire in 1834, and were injured or supposed to have been destroyed when the Houses of Parliament were burned. Later, however, certain of them were discovered in the ruins, among them particularly the yard measure, and they are now preserved, still under the charge of the Clerk of the House, in a lobby leading to that officer's residence, reached by a corridor at the back of the Speaker's Chair.

In 1854, in consequence of the recommendations of a Royal Commission, new Imperial standards were made and duly legalised. The yard and the pound were verified by comparison. Copies of the new Imperial standards were then deposited in the Houses of Parliament, Royal Mint, etc., and they are known as the "Parliamentary copies," the object being that should the original standards be lost or injured, authentic copies can be easily found. By a subsequent Act of Parliament the "Parliamentary copies" are required to be compared with each other once in twenty years, and upon the last occasion (1892) Mr. Speaker Arthur W. Peel, accompanied by the high officers of the Board of Trade and the Secretary to the Lord Great Chamberlain, met together for the purpose. The "Parliamentary copies" of the standards were removed from their place of deposit within the wall under the blank window on the right-

<sup>1</sup> "Treatise on Standard Weights and Measures in use in the British Empire," 1897.

hand side of the second landing of the public staircase leading from the lower waiting hall up to the Commons committee-rooms in the new Palace of Westminster, and being compared with the standards produced by the Board of Trade were declared not in any way destroyed, defaced, or otherwise injured, but to all intents and purposes in the same condition as when they were immured in 1872. Subsequently, on the report of Mr. Henry J. Chaney, the Superintendent of Weights and Measures, they were replaced in their original cases and boxes in the following manner: The platinum pound was wrapped in Swedish filtering paper, and was then placed in its silver-gilt case, which in its turn was placed in a square solid bronze case; the bronze case was afterwards deposited in a mahogany box, which was screwed down and sealed. The immured yard was placed on its eight rollers within a mahogany box, which was also screwed down and sealed. Both mahogany boxes were then deposited within a lead case, which was soldered down. Finally, the oak box was put within the cavity in the stone wall. Before the removal of the standards a mason had carefully swn through the cement round the joints of a large stone which closed the cavity, and after they had been re-deposited the same stone was inserted and was grouted in with cement. The brass tablet now upon the wall records the fact that "Within this wall are deposited standards of the British yard measure and the British pound weight." This record of the standards makes it evident that the present Imperial measures, etc., were derived from those of Queen Elizabeth, and these in their turn from the time of Henry VII., the latter having withstood the changes of four centuries.

At one period the standards were kept, under the charge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the Pyx Chapel at Westminster Abbey. The entrance to this is near the Chapter House, through massive double doors which are still in a state of good preservation. In the interior are shown the altar (which, it appears, may have been used for coinage purposes), a number of old oak presses in which State records were stored, and chests in which the standards and assays of gold and silver were deposited. Dean Stanley in his "Memorials of Westminster Abbey" thus describes the Pyx Chapel: "In the east cloister is an



IMPOUNDED FALSE MEASURES IN THE JEWEL TOWER MUSEUM.

An interesting collection preserved by the Standards Department to illustrate the ingenuity of the fraudulent trader.



THE JEWEL TOWER.

Showing the spiral staircase and old door, the quaint shape of which will be noted.

ancient double door made of oak, each door having three locks which admit to the chapel, which was no less than the Treasury of England—a grand word, which, while it conveys us back to the most primitive times, is yet big with the destinies of the present and the future of that sacred body. It was probably immediately after the Conquest that the Kings determined to lodge their treasures there, under the guardianship of the inviolable sanctuary which St. Peter had consecrated and the bones of the Confessor had sanctified."

Connected with the garden which once existed about the Jewel Tower is a curious story which Dean Stanley recalls in his fascinating work. "Not far from the tower," he says, "lived a hermit who formed an adjunct of the monastic community—an advanced guard of peculiar sanctity. The anchorite who occupied this tenement at the close of the fourteenth century was buried in a leaden coffin in a small chapel attached to his cell. A certain William Ushborne, keeper of the adjacent Palace, suborned a plumber of the convent to dig up the sacred bones, which he tossed into the well in the centre of the cloister cemetery, and had the leaden coffin conveyed by its iron

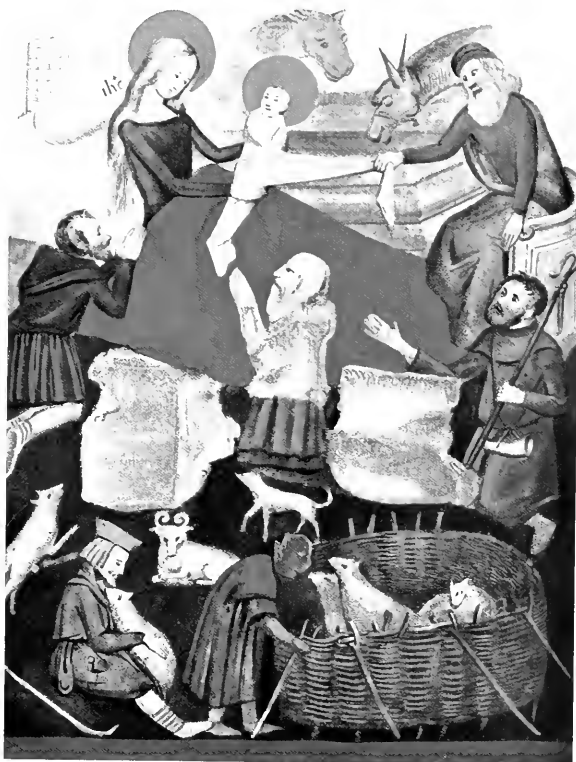
clasp to his office. The sacrilege was first visited on the poor plumber, who was seized with sudden faintness and died in Ushborne's house. This, however, was but the beginning of Ushborne's crimes. He afterwards contrived to appropriate the waste marsh (between the tower and the river), which he turned into a garden, with a pond to preserve his own fresh fish. On a certain fast day—the Vigil of St. Peter ad Vincula—the day before the great conventual feast on the fat bucks of Windsor—he invited his Westminster neighbours to a supper. Out of the pond he had fished a large pike. He himself began upon it, and after two or three mouthfuls he screamed out, 'Look! look! here is come a fellow who is going to choke me,' and, thus caught without the *viaticum* by the very fish which had been the cause of his sacrilege, he died on the spot, and was buried in the choir of St. Margaret's." This story long went round the monastic circle at Westminster, and lent to this corner of the Abbey precincts a tinge of real romance until the modern "house-breaker" and road-maker came along and gave to the scene of the ghostly hermit's retreat a thoroughly modern and commonplace appearance. The well-known house in Old Palace Yard occupied by Mr. Labouchere abuts upon the Jewel Tower, and it could not have been far from his garden that the sacrilegious Ushborne caught the mysterious pike which caused his death.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL.*

IN the general description of the old Palace of Westminster allusion has been made to the erection of St. Stephen's Chapel; but in view of the architectural importance of the building and its fame as the home of the House of Commons during three centuries, some more lengthened reference to it seems to be demanded before we take final leave of the architectural features of the Palace of Westminster, old and new. As a collegiate chapel, with all the attributes of such an ecclesiastical establishment, situated in the heart of the Palace of the King, it enjoyed during the early centuries of its existence a special distinction. Jewels were lavished upon its shrines with extraordinary profuseness. Its decorations also, as we shall have occasion to show, were on a scale of magnificence such as marked no other sacred building of that period. Moreover, its services were of exceptional splendour; in fact, there were few churches in the country which, in its day, were more famous. Yet such were its vicissitudes that the building is remembered in this age, not as a great ecclesiastical establishment, but as a political and legislative centre second to none in the world for the engrossing interest of the events of which it has been the scene.

When the faithful Commons left the Chapter House of the Abbey—or were ejected from it for disorderly behaviour according to one authority—the Chapel, in which they were then installed,



ONE OF THE PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL.  
The subject illustrated is the Nativity. The picture is interesting as one of the earliest specimens of paintings in oils in this country.



ONE OF THE BASSO-RELIEFS IN THE CENTRE OF THE GROINS OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL CLOISTERS.

had sadly degenerated. Its rich endowments diverted to other uses,<sup>1</sup> its clergy scattered, and the spirit of devotion which had once ministered to its magnificence extinct, it had fallen into neglect, and possibly also into some decay. In what manner it was adapted to its legislative purposes there is no record extant to show. The presumption is that when it was handed over to the Commons in the years immediately suc-



A FIGURE OF AN ANGEL WHICH APPEARED IN THE ORNAMENTAL STONE-WORK OF THE OLD ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL CLOISTERS.

ceeding the Act for the suppression of the religious foundations, it was fitted up in much the style which marked it in the next century. In the earliest views extant of the House of Commons—those on the seals of the Court of King's Bench and the Court of Common Pleas, cast in 1648—the walls are shown with a plain wainscoting and with the ecclesiastical features of the edifice otherwise disguised. A change appears to have been made a little later by the introduction of tapestry hangings, for the Commonwealth seal of 1651 represents the walls thus covered. The aspect of the House was not materially changed until the reign of Queen Anne, when, to provide greater accommodation, Sir Christopher Wren was called in to erect galleries. Whatever the services of the eminent architect elsewhere, he shone very inconspicuously in his work at the Palace of Westminster. His alterations were mostly in the nature of disfigurements, tending, as they did, to conceal, and in some instances to mutilate, the beautiful work of the ancient Chapel. Viewing the matter in the light of subsequent discoveries, it is extraordinary that so great a master of taste should have given his sanction to changes which tended to mar still further such a noble edifice as the Chapel even then was. But it is possible that his hands were tied by his instructions—that the duty imposed upon him was not to renovate and restore, but merely to provide additional elbow-room for members, whose numbers had been swollen by the then recent Union with Scotland.

After the completion of Wren's alterations, the Chapel underwent no other important change until a further addition to the accommodation was rendered necessary in 1800 by the admission of one hundred and three Irish members as a consequence of the Union with Ireland. To meet the exigency an ingenious scheme was adopted. This was the razing of the old side walls

of the Chapel, which were three feet thick, and the building upon the foundation of a new wall only one foot thick. In this way an additional width of four feet was obtained in the chamber, sufficient to meet the new demands.

As soon as the wainscoting was removed preparatory to carrying out the plan, it was discovered that the old stone walls

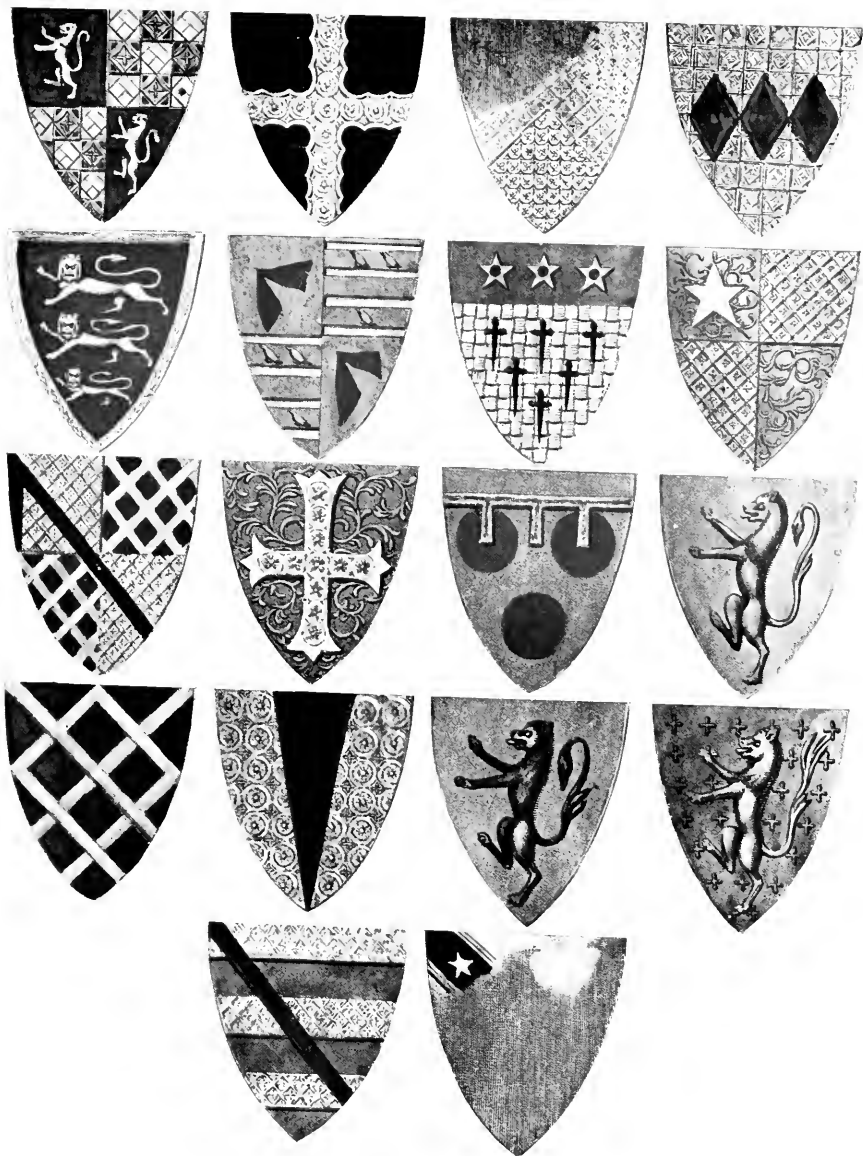


REPRESENTATION OF THE SAVIOUR SEEN IN THE MASONRY OF THE OLD ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL CLOISTERS.



SACRED MONOGRAM USED IN THE ORNAMENTATION OF THE OLD ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL CLOISTERS.

<sup>1</sup> By a statute of 1 Edward VI. (A.D. 1547)



# ARMORIAL BEARINGS FROM ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL.

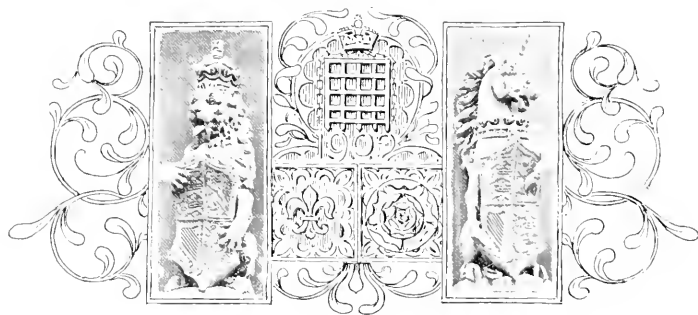
Reproduced from Smith's "Antiquities of Westminster," where they are identified as follows, reading from left to right: 1, Richard FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel, d. 1355; 2, Robert Earl of Suffolk, d. 1307; 3, Ralph Earl of Stafford, d. 1350; 4, William, Earl of Salisbury, d. 1320; 5, Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent; 6, Lawrence Lathmer, d. 1381; 7, John Lord Clinton, d. 1387; 8, John Vere, Earl of Oxford, d. 1358; 9, Edward Lord Despenser, 1375; 10, William Lord 1370; 11, Hugh Courtney, Earl of Devon, d. 1376; 12, Henry Lord Percy, d. 1368; 13, Sir James Audley, afterwards Lord Audley; 14, Sir John Chandless, K.G., d. 1370; 15, John de Sutton, Lord Dudley, d. 1359; 16, Henry Lord Beaumont, d. 1359; 17, John Lord Grey, of Codre; 18, too much defaced to be read with certainty.

were enriched with a series of beautiful paintings, many of them in a perfect state of preservation. Some remarkably fine sculptured figures and ornaments were also brought to light, and it was furthermore seen that the elegant tracery of the windows had been adorned with ancient stained glass. The subjects treated were mostly scriptural. "Upon one side was seen St. Mary and St. Joseph; before them knelt King Edward III., his Queen and Count laying their rich offerings before the feet of the Blessed Child. Upon the walls were paintings representing scriptural subjects; and on each side of the altar were frescoes of the Nativity of Our Most Blessed Lord and Saviour, the presentation of the Holy Infant in the Temple, the marriage of Cana of Galilee, and the temptation of the Redeemer in the Wilderness. In the windows were represented Adam and Eve, Noah and his family, Abraham, Joseph, the history of the Israelites, and the chief incidents in the life of the Lord Jesus, from his baptism in the River Jordan until the last dread hours of the Crucifixion upon Calvary."<sup>1</sup>

The discoveries created a great sensation in antiquarian circles, and a thorough investigation of the remains was made. Upon the irrefragable evidence afforded by the old records of the work done at the Chapel and the payments made for it, it was concluded that the paintings were executed between the years 1345 and 1364, in the reign of Edward III. An interesting circumstance also disclosed was that many of the paintings were in oils, and that they were consequently amongst the earliest specimens of that class of art work in existence.

Little need be said of the later structural history of the Chapel. In its enlarged condition it remained unchanged until the fire of 1834 burnt out the flimsy galleries and partitions and other modern features, and left the shell of the ancient building standing, gaunt and black, but yet with many traces of its old beauty upon it. Afterwards, as is related elsewhere, the walls were pulled down to make way for the new Palace of Westminster of Sir Charles Barry, and all that is left to us of the famous building is its brilliant memories of three hundred years of national life. But what memories they are! Across the floor flit the images of all the great men who helped in the government of the country from the spacious age of Elizabeth to the Golden Era of Victoria. Cecil, Coke, Hyde, Pym, Hampden, Cromwell, Somers, Walpole, Bolingbroke, Harley, St. John, the two Pitts, Fox, Pelham, Mansfield, Sheridan, Burke, Canning, Melbourne, Peel, Gladstone—these are a few of the names that instantly occur to the mind in connection with this ancient building. Its secular history is an epitome of the growth and development of modern constitutional government. Some of the greatest events in English history—events which had their direct influence in the moulding of the British Empire—actually occurred within its walls. If it still existed, no single chamber would have a profounder interest or more stirring associations for the politician or for the student.

<sup>1</sup> Walcott's "Memorials of Westminster."









THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT FROM LAMBETH PALACE

This is the best general view which is obtainable. It shows Barry's splendid design in its happiest and most impressive aspect.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### PARLIAMENT IN BEING—ROYAL SPEECHES.

FAR back in the remote past of Parliamentary history must be sought the genesis of those ornate ceremonies which now accompany the opening of Parliament. But in the earliest days no doubt the forms in many respects differed very widely from those now observed. At that period the monarch lived almost constantly in the Palace of Westminster, and as Parliaments were customarily held in one or other of its rooms there was little scope for display apart from that associated with the ordinary everyday life of the Court. Moreover, it is not difficult to understand that the Norman and Plantagenet Kings did not feel impelled to emphasise by spectacle the existence of the controlling authority which from time to time set itself to oppose their arbitrary decrees. Parliament met and discharged certain functions, and that is about all that can be said on the subject.

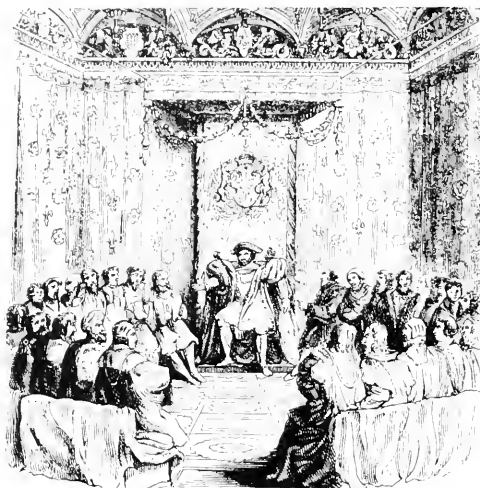
The earliest authentic record in any detail of the opening of Parliament is of the assembly summoned at Westminster by Henry III. on January 28th, 1242. On this occasion there does not appear to have been any speech from the throne, as we now understand the term. The monarch's demands, which were for financial aid to prosecute a war with France for the recovery of his lost possessions, were voiced by Earl Richard, Archbishop Walter Grey, and the Provost of Beverley. To them the Parliament gave an unfavourable answer in a memorable document which constitutes the first recorded example of a reply to the throne. Two years later, when the pressing necessities of the State constrained the King again to seek the assistance of his subjects, he acted as his own spokesman. A similar course was adopted by him on subsequent occasions. Indeed, with the lapse of time and the growth of the popular discontent at the King's misgovernment, the proceedings of Parliament largely partook of the character of an altercation between Henry and his barons. Edward I., following the precedent thus established of direct personal communication with Parliament, intervened freely in the discussions in the national council chamber, and exercised a real influence in the framing of those laws which have won for him the title of the "English Justinian." To him we owe perhaps the most remarkable King's speech that was ever delivered. It was not the studied, formal composition which now passes under the name, but an impassioned harangue—an appeal to the people if ever there was one—delivered from a wooden stage erected in front of Westminster Hall. The occasion of this notable piece of Royal oratory was the crisis precipitated in 1297 by Edward's unconstitutional act in ordering a general military levy of the country. Alarmed at the menacing attitude of the earls and barons, led by Bohun and Bigod, the King decided upon a frank public confession of his error and a promise of amendment as the best means of recovering his lost authority. His address—one of the



*From a Harleian Ms.*

HENRY V. IN PARLIAMENT.

The monkish aspect of the assembly will be noted. In the earlier Parliaments the ecclesiastical element was very pronounced.



From Holfe's "Chronicle," 1548.

HENRY VII. AND HIS COUNCIL.

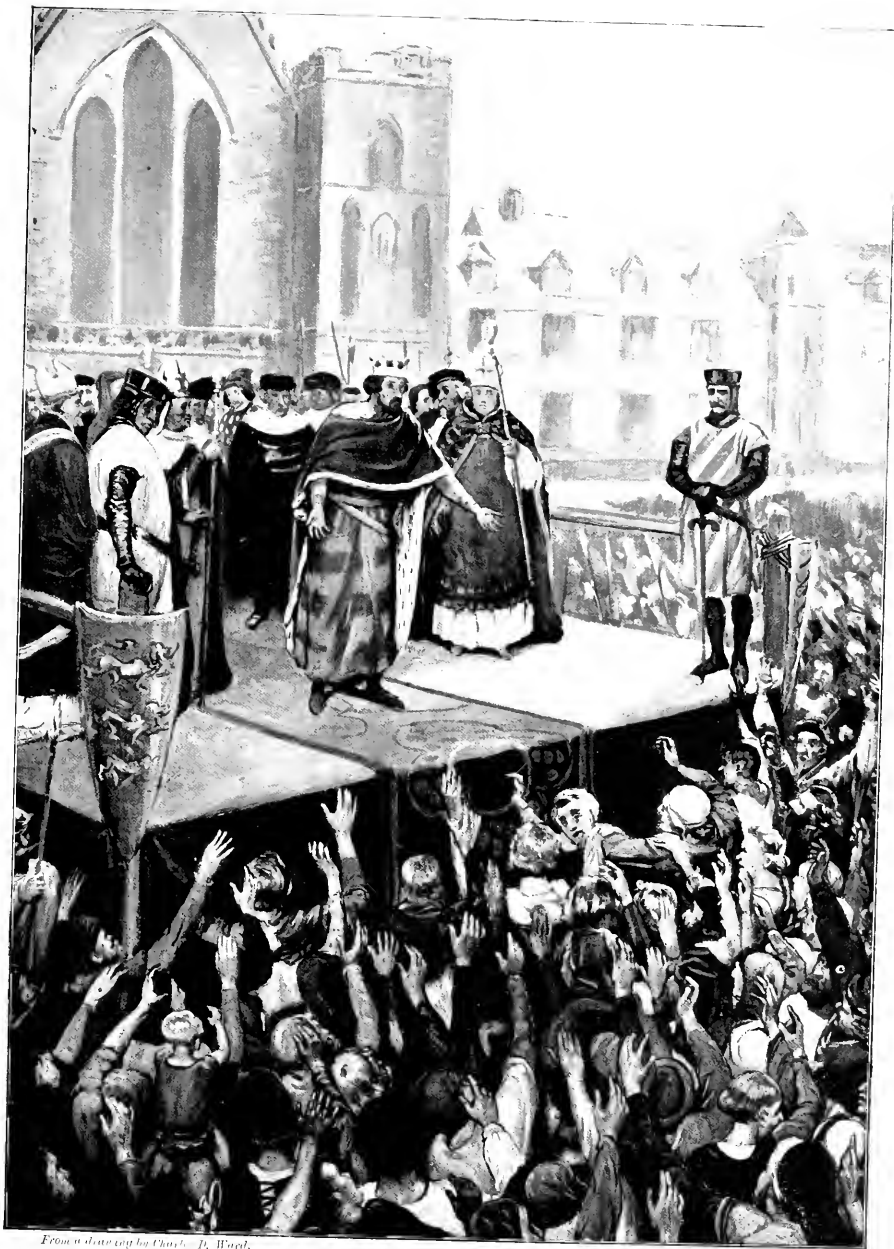
Chancellor. Almost simultaneously there was established the practice, followed to this day, of a debate on the speech, terminated by the adoption of an address to the Crown. Most authorities assign the delivery of the first regular reply to a Royal speech to the reign of Edward III. It is certain that from that period dates much of the procedure of Parliament as we know it to-day. The rule of the delivery of a speech by the Lord Chancellor was not maintained without exceptions. There was a notable departure from the ordinary practice on May 2nd, 1421, when Henry V. declared "with his own mouth" the Royal wishes. The King's necessities at the time were great, owing to the costliness of the war with France, and he no doubt felt the desirability of exercising his great personal influence to secure the supplies requisite for the execution of his plans. With his death the old order of the delivery of Royal speeches by proxy was reverted to of necessity. Henry VI. was a mere infant when he commenced to reign, and the opening of his first Parliament supplies perhaps as curious a picture as any that the records on this branch of the subject afford. The tiny monarch was brought from the Tower on a very tall horse through the crowded streets, and after being regaled with fare suited to his tender age, was solemnly taken to the House of Lords, where, sitting on his mother's lap, he discharged his part—most probably a noisy one—in the day's ceremony. "It was a strange sight," says an old chronicler, "and the first time it was ever so seen in England."

With little variation the procedure at the opening of Parliament remained as it was in Henry VI.'s reign until the imperious Elizabeth appeared upon the throne. The Virgin Queen, with her love of display and her dominating force of character, infused a new personal element into the ceremony, giving to it a brilliancy and importance that had never previously marked it. The industrious D'Ewes, as watchful for picturesque incident as the latter-day professional Parliamentary sketch-writers, has left us some vivid word-pictures of these great legislative functions. As they are the first really detailed descriptions of the opening of Parliament that are extant, some excerpts from them will not be without interest or value. The narrative, so far as we are concerned, opens with the assembly of the first Parliament of Elizabeth's reign on Monday, January 25th, 1558. This is the scene in the House of Lords as D'Ewes saw it:—

"Her Majesty sat in the Chair of Estate, and when she stood up her mantle was assisted and borne up from her arms by two Noblemen or others of Eminent Rank thereunto appointed.

earliest, if not the earliest, platform speeches in our history—was tremendously effective. In strains of real eloquence, if we are to believe the chronicler Matthew of Westminster, he expressed his sorrow at past faults and his determination to govern constitutionally in the future. Concluding, he said: "I am going to expose myself to danger for your sakes. I pray you, if I return, receive me as you have me now, and I will restore to you all that has been taken. But if I return not, crown my son as your King." Deeply stirred by the oration, the assembled populace lifted up their hands in token of their devotion.

As Parliament developed in power, the proceedings became more regular and protracted, and the relations of the King with the assembly grew less intimate. In course of time the custom arose of the King having his speech delivered by deputy, that deputy being the Lord



*From a drawing by Charles J. Woolf.*

EDWARD I. ADDRESSING HIS SUBJECTS IN NEW PALACE YARD IN 1297.

The populace are shown lifting up their hands in token of their devotion.

The two Seats, on the right and left hand of the Chair of Estate, were void in respect that the first was Anciently for the King of Scots, when he used to come to our Parliaments, and the other on the left hand is for the Prince, the immediate heir to the Crown. On the form on the right side of the Chair of Estate, which stands on the north side of the Upper House, usually sat the spiritual Lords—the Archbishop of York beginning the form and the Abbot of Westminster ending it. This was the last Abbot that ever sat in the House in England, and upon this occasion the two Archbishops sat upon one form by themselves, and then the other Bishops in order upon two forms, on the right hand of the State. The Bishop of London first, the Bishop of Durham second, and the Bishop of Winchester in the third place, and then all the other Bishops according to the antiquity of their Consecrations. On the left side of the Chair of State, which is on the south side of the Upper House, upon the foremost form, sat all the Temporal Lords above the degree of Barons. The Marquis of Winchester, Lord Treasurer of England, beginning that form, and the Viscountess Bindon ending it. The Barons sat on the second form, on the left hand of the State. The Lord Clinton, Lord High Admiral of England, began the form by virtue of his Office, and the Lord St. John of Bletsoe ended it. Upon subsequent meetings of the House in this and the next session one form was deemed sufficient for all the Barons, but upon this occasion, the attendance being large, many Barons sat upon other Forms, Cross-ways, at the lower end of the House.

"Sir Nicholas Bacon, although the Lord Keeper and also Her Majesty's Chief Secretary, was under the degree of a Baron; being but a knight, stood behind the Cloth of the Estate on the right hand. Upon subsequent occasions, Her Majesty not being present, his Lordship sat on the first Woolsack, which is placed athwart the House, the Seal and Mace by him.

"On the Woolsack on the north side of the House and on the right hand of the Estate sat the two Chief Justices and other Judges. On the Woolsack on the left hand of the Estate and on the south side of the House, sat the Master of the Rolls, the Lord Chief Baron, and the Queen's Learned Council and others. All these may be said to sit on the inner side of the Woolsacks, and the Queen's Learned Council on the outside, next the Bishops.

"The Clerk of the Crown and Clerk of the Parliament sat on the Lower Woolsack and had a Table before them. The Clerk of the Parliaments had to assist him, his Clerks, but they kneeled behind the Woolsack, and wrote thereon.

"All the Peers had their Mantles, Hoods, and Surcoats of Crimson Velvet or Scarlet, furred with Miniver, their Arms put on the right side, and the Duke of Norfolk had four bars of Miniver, the Marquis of Winchester and the Earls three, and the Barons two.

"The Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses of the House of Commons having been summoned by Her Majesty's Command, as many as could be conveniently let in stood below the rail or bar of the House. Sir Nicholas Bacon, after conferring privately with the Queen, delivered Her Majesty's reason for summoning Parliament. As soon as Lord Keeper ended his Speech the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses retired to the House of Commons to elect their Speaker."

The opening of a subsequent Parliament—that of 1562—found



*From a woodcut on the title to the Acts of Parliament, 1554.*

EDWARD VI. AND HIS COUNCIL.

The picture represents a scene in one of the old rooms of the Palace of Westminster—probably the Painted Chamber.



*From a drawing by A. D. Motenbach.*

# HENRY VI. OPENING PARLIAMENT WITH HIS MOTHER.

This is the only instance recorded in English history in which Parliament was opened by a Sovereign of tender years.



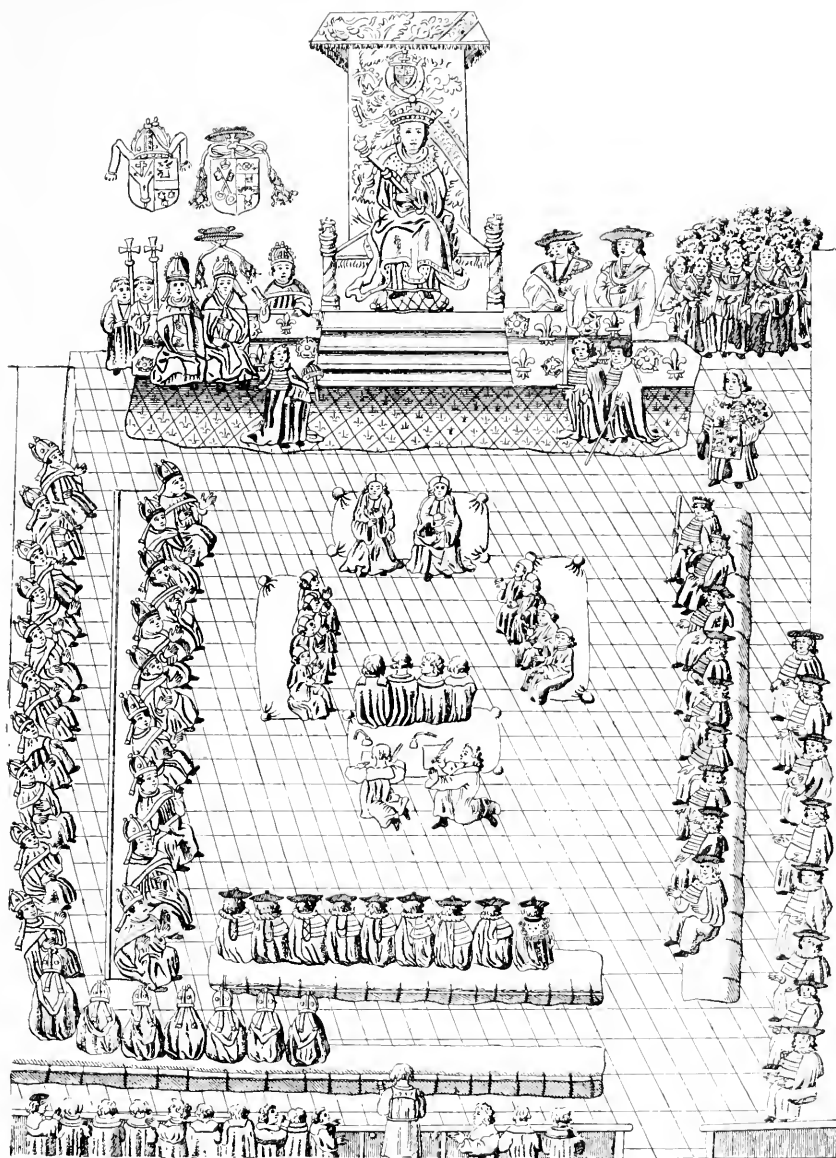
CHARLES II. ON HIS WAY TO OPEN PARLIAMENT.

The monarch at this period, and for some little time later, was accustomed to make the journey through the streets on horseback with a great retinue, also mounted.

D'Ewes again at his post, indefatigably recording his impressions. This time he gives us a glimpse of the spectacle outside the Parliament House.

"On Tuesday, January 12th," he says, "the Parliament was held, and about 11 o'clock in the forenoon Her Majesty took her Horse at the Hall Door and proceeded in the following manner to the Church of Westminster. First, all Gentlemen two and two, then Esquires, Knights, Bannerets, and Lords being no Barons, or under age. Then the Trumpeters, the Queen's Sergeant in his Circot-Hood and Mantle, unlined, of Scarlet, the Queen's Attorney and Solicitor, Justices, Barons of the Exchequer, Master of the Rolls in his Gown, and Knights Councillors in their Gowns. After these came Sir William Cecil, Chief Secretary, and Sir Edward Rogers, Comptroller, and William Howard bearing the Queen's Cloak and Hat, followed by thirty Barons in their Mantles, Hoods, and Circots furr'd, and two rows of Miniver on their right Shoulders. Then the Bishops, their Robes of Scarlet lined and a hood down their backs of Miniver, the Viscounts, Earls, followed by the Marquis of Winchester and Marquis of Northampton. Lord Keeper's Sergeant and Seal, and after Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, in his Gown. Now came the Herald Clarenceux and Norrys and Queen's Sergeant-at-Arms, followed by Garter. The Duke of Norfolk, with Gilt Rod as Marshal, the Lord Treasurer with the Cap of Estate, and the Earl of Worcester with the Sword. Now came Her Majesty on horseback, a little behind the Lord Chamberlain and Vice-Chamberlain. Her Grace apparell'd in her Mantle opened before, furred with Ermines, and her Kirtle of Crimson Velvet close before and close sleeves, but the Hands turned up with Ermines and a hood hanging low, round about her neck. Over all a rich collar, set with Stones and other jewels, and on her head a rich Caul. And the next after her, the Lord Robert Dudley, Master of the Horse, leading a spare horse. And after all other ladies two and two, in their ordinary apparel. By the side the Queen went with her footmen, and along on either side of her went the pensioners, with their Axes; after the ladies followed the Captain of the Guard, Sir William St. Loe, and then the Guard.





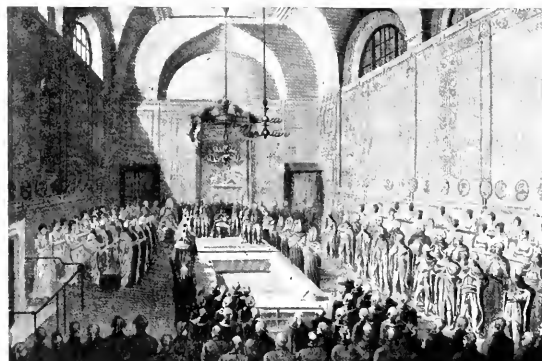
*From a drawing ordered by the then Garter.*

#### THE HOUSE OF PEERS, WITH HENRY VIII. ON THE THRONE.

Wolsey is seen on the left of the picture seated by the throne, with the Cardinal's hat above his head. Next to him is Walsingham, Archbishop of Canterbury. The Speaker of the House of Commons is in attendance at the Bar with others of the Lower House, one of whom is covered, a privilege granted to several persons in the reign of Henry VIII.

"In this order Her Majesty proceeded to the North Door of the Church of Westminster, where the Dean there and the Dean of the Chapel met her, and the whole chapel in copes, St. Edward's Staff was delivered to her. A canopy was borne over her by Knights, and her Grace's Train was, from the weight thereof, held from her by Lord Robert Dudley, Master of the Horse, and Sir Francis Knowles, Vice-Chamberlain, and so proceeded to the Travers beside the Table of Administration. All the Lords sat down beside the Travers, Lords Spiritual on the one side, Temporal on the other, and the Sword and Cap of Estate was laid upon the table. The choir having sung the English procession, Mr. Noell, Dean of St. Paul's, began his sermon, first offering a prayer for the Queen's Majesty and the Universal Church, and the Honourable Assembly of three Estates there present, that they might make such laws, as should be to God's Glory and the good of the Realm.

"The sermon being ended and a psalm sung, Her Majesty and the rest orderly on foot proceeded out of the South Door, where she delivered the Dean her sceptre, and so proceeded to the Parliament Chamber, where the Queen stayed a while in her privy Chamber, till all the Lords and others were placed, and then Her Highness came forth, and went and sat down in her Royal place and the Chair of Estate (the Sword and Cap of Maintenance borne before her, and when she stood up her mantle was held by Lord Dudley as before.



GEORGE III. ON HIS THRONE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

at the back of the Cloth of Estate, behind the rail, kneeled certain Lords under age and other noblemen's sons and heirs.

"Her Majesty in this solemn manner being seated, the House of Commons had notice thereof, and the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses repaired to the Upper House, and being, as many as conveniently could, let in, she commanded Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper, to open the cause of calling and assembling of Parliament. After the delivery of the Royal Message, the Commons were directed to 'go, and elect one, a discreet, wise, and learned man, to be your Speaker,' and the Queen returned to her Chamber, thence attended by the Lords to the water-side, where she took her boat and departed to Whitehall, from whence she came."

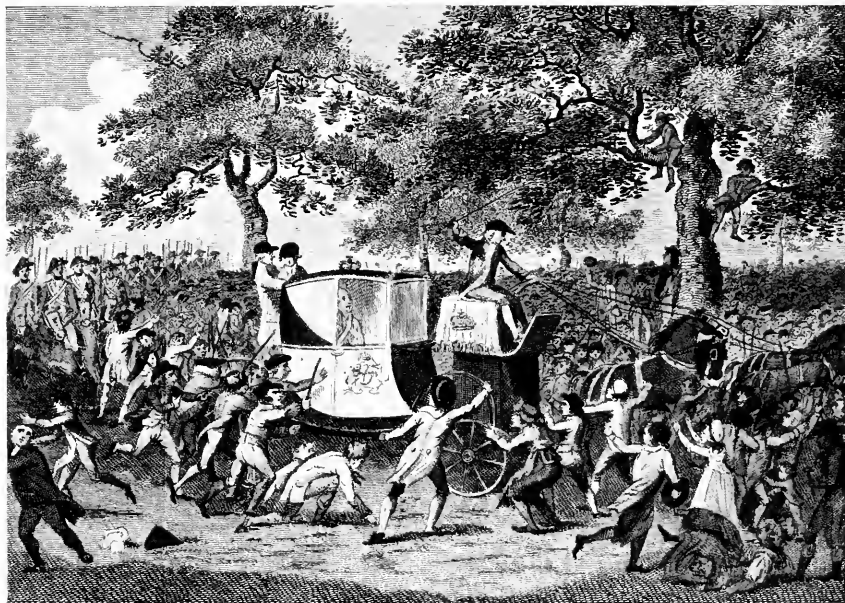
A further description penned by D'Ewes, relative to the opening of Parliament on April 2nd, 1571, shows the ceremony from yet another point of view. Says the old diarist: "Her Majesty came about 11 o'clock towards Westminster, having first riding before her the gentlemen sworn to attend her person, etc. . . . Her Majesty sat in her Coach in Her Imperial Robes, and a wreath or coronet of Gold, set with rich pearls and stones, over her head; Her Coach, drawn by two palfreys, covered with rich Crimson Velvet, drawn out, imbossed and embroidered very richly. Next after her Chariot followed the Earl of Leicester, Master of the Horse. Then forty-seven Ladies and women of honour." After service in the Abbey, "she

"The Lord Keeper sat alone upon the uppermost sack, until the Queen was seated, and then went and stood without the Rail on the right hand of the Cloth of Estate, the Lord Treasurer holding the Cap of Estate on the right hand before the Queen, Garter standing by him, and on the left hand standing the Earl of Worcester with the Sword and by him the Lord Chamberlain. The peers sat upon the forms and sacks in accordance with their ranks.

"At the right hand of the Queen sat on the ground three or four ladies, and no more, and

entered into the Upper House of Parliament, and there sat in princely and seeming comfort. . . . Then Her Majesty stood up in her regal seat, and with princely grace and singular good countenance, after a long stay, spake a few words, ordering the Lord Keeper to show cause of the meeting of Parliament."

These graphic records of D'Ewes bring before us in pleasant fashion the pageantry which accompanied the opening of Parliament in the Elizabethan period. Apart from their interest as pictures of the Legislature as it was three centuries ago, they have a historic importance from the light they throw on ceremonial usages and the laws of precedence. In reading them it is impossible to avoid being struck with the small departure from the order of procedure that has been made in the three hundred years that have elapsed since the descriptions were



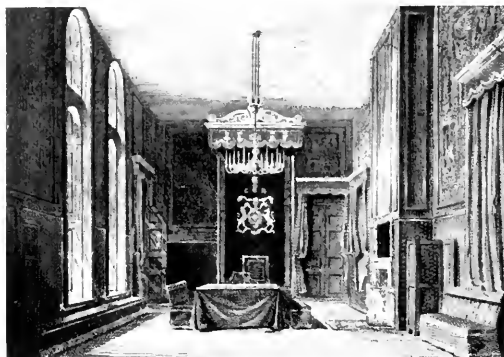
*From an engraving after a drawing by Cruikshank.*

KING GEORGE III. ATTACKED BY A MOB ON HIS RETURN FROM THE HOUSE OF LORDS AFTER OPENING PARLIAMENT ON OCTOBER 29TH, 1795.

A bullet pierced one of the carriage windows, but the King was unhurt. The outrage arose out of the ferment caused by the French Revolution.

penned. In all main essentials the ceremony is the same to-day as it was then, and even many of the details are identical.

Happily, D'Ewes's labours as a Parliamentary reporter did not close with the death of Elizabeth. When James I. mounted the throne he was still at his post, as assiduous as ever in committing to paper his impressions of Parliamentary events. Highly amusing some of these records are in their quaint directness of language and their photographic completeness. One of the fullest and most characteristic descriptions is that which relates to the opening of the Parliament of 1620-21. On this occasion D'Ewes, having posted himself in a "convenient place," though "not without some danger escaped," carefully noted the various features of the Royal procession as it passed from Whitehall to Westminster. "Prince Charles rode, with a rich coronet upon his head, between the Sergeant-at-Arms, carrying maces, and the pensioners carrying their pole-axes, both on foot." Next rode before



THE KING'S ROBING-ROOM, HOUSE OF LORDS, AS IT WAS BEFORE THE FIRE.

contrary to his former and hasty and passionate custom, which often in his sudden distemper would bid a plague on such as flocked to see him. Secondly, though the Windows were filled with many great ladies as he rode along, yet that he spake to none of them but to the Marquis of Buckingham's mother and wife, who was the sole daughter and heir of the Earl of Rutland. Thirdly, that he spake particularly and bowed to the Count of Gondemar, the Spanish Ambassador. And fourthly, that looking up to one window as he passed, full of gentlewomen and ladies, all in yellow bands, he cried out aloud, "A — take ye, are ye there?" at which being much ashamed, they all withdrew themselves suddenly from the window."

Arrived at last at the House of Lords, the King made "a pithy and eloquent speech," profuse in promises of the removal of monopolies and other grievances which at the time pressed hardly upon his subjects. His Majesty concluded by desiring Parliament "cheerfully and speedily to agree upon a sufficient supply of his wants by subsidies, promising them for the time to come to play the good husband and observing that in part he had done so already." "I doubt not," oracularly remarks D'Ewes in winding up his narrative, "these blessed promises took not a due and proportional effect, according as the loyal subject did hope; yet did King James, a prince whose piety, learning, and gracious government after ages many miss and wish for, really at this time intend the performance of them."

James in this case, it will be noted, acted as his own spokesman. This was his usual practice. Like Elizabeth, he found great pleasure in lecturing Parliament, and he did so at times with a freedom which, as has been shown in an earlier chapter, has supplied us with some astonishing examples of Royal eloquence. He was not above cracking jokes when he addressed the people's representatives; once he almost melted into tears as he expostulated with them on their frowardness. At all times he was curiously garrulous. On one occasion he spoke for upwards of an hour, to the astonishment of legislators, who had not been accustomed to such Royal feats of oratory. The personal tradition was more than maintained in the reign of his son, the ill-fated Charles. Royal speeches at that period were not infrequently impassioned utterances pregnant with great events. He regarded his control of Parliamentary proceedings as very real, and did not hesitate, as in the case of the attempt to arrest the five members, to directly interpose in the proceedings of either House when it was necessary to do so to secure his ends. In the Commonwealth the Royal speech necessarily disappeared, but the form remained with other Parliamentary usages, and invariably Cromwell in meeting his Parliaments addressed them directly in vigorous rhetoric, of which he was so accomplished a master.

The Restoration witnessed a change from the rule of personal oratory. Charles II. did

his Majesty "Henry Vere, Earl of Oxford, Lord Great Chamberlain of England, with Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, Earl Marshal of England, on his left hand, both bare-headed." The King himself appeared "with a rich crown upon his head and most royally comparisomed." In his passage through the streets occurred these passages which the diarist notes "were accounted somewhat remarkable," as, indeed, they were, according to our twentieth-century ideas of Royal dignity at least: "First, he spake often and lovingly to his people, standing thick and three folds on all sides to behold him, 'God bless ye! God bless ye!

not shine as a speaker, and his utterances were in the main characterised by a business-like brevity. Sometimes he did not even trouble the Houses with a speech of any kind. Thus, on February 4th, 1673, we find Sir Edward Harley writing to his wife to the following effect: "This day Parliament was convened. The King did not speak; the Lord Chancellor shortly only to recommend to the choice of a Speaker, which proved to be Sir Job Charlton."

A striking departure from this easy-going system was made after the Revolution of 1688. When out of the old Court and Country factions grew the permanent division of members of Parliament into Whigs and Tories—Ministerialists and members of the Opposition—and power went to the strongest, the drafting of the Royal speeches became a matter of high political concern. At the outset, probably the work of compilation was that of individual Ministers who were most in touch with the Sovereign. This is indicated by the following letter from Lord Godolphin to Robert Harley (afterwards Earl of Oxford) under date September 16th, 1702:—

"I had a mind to trouble you with the enclosed rough draft of what I have prepared for her Majesty's speech to the approaching Parliament, being uncertain how long before the time of their meeting I may have the good fortune to see you, and being also extremely desirous of your thoughts and amendments upon it before it be exposed to anybody else."

Godolphin's apparently casual consultation with his colleague was the forerunner of a settled system of deliberation upon the Royal speeches. Gradually all the leading members of the ruling party—in other words, the Cabinet—shared the responsibility for the work; and it is evident from a passage in the "Pelham Correspondence" that even in early Georgian days the Ministerial control of the framing of the speech was very real. From this communication we gather that in 1744 the King (George II.) directed Pelham to draw up a sketch of the intended speech to Parliament in order that he might form a proper judgment of the measures likely to be recommended by them. A draft of the speech having been presented by the



*From a drawing made on the spot.*

GEORGE IV. GOING IN STATE TO OPEN PARLIAMENT IN 1821.

The procession is shown passing down Whitehall.



*From a contemporary print.*

WILLIAM IV. PROROGUING PARLIAMENT, APRIL, 1831.

One of the last State ceremonies performed in the old House of Lords.

A good many years before this period a custom had arisen which demands some notice. This was the submission of the draft of the Royal speech at a specially summoned gathering of the Ministerial party on the eve of the assembling of Parliament. The meeting-place was the Cockpit, an annexe of the old Palace of Whitehall, which stood on the site of the ancient institution of that name established by the sport-loving Henry VIII. Doubts have been cast, and by no less an authority than Lord Rosebery, upon the exact locale of this famous building; but all maps and plans clearly indicate that it occupied the ground upon which the Treasury is built. Some reference to its singularly interesting history will be made in a subsequent chapter. Meanwhile, it is sufficient for immediate purposes to state that in Walpole's time it was used for Ministerial business much as the houses in Downing Street are to-day, and that in addition it was a rendezvous for supporters of those in power. How or exactly when the practice of submitting the Royal speech for approval was introduced it is difficult to say. It is fairly certain, however, that it was regularly observed during the greater part of Walpole's long period of power, and that when he disappeared from the scene it was continued as a matter of course as an established piece of party procedure. We gather this from a letter which Walpole himself addressed on October 31st, 1742, to Pelham. Writing from his retirement at Houghton, the ex-Premier said: "You must be the first wheel in the machine, and whoever will think of making your authority less will create difficulties that will not be easily got through. Upon this principle I venture to give you my opinion upon a point that seems to me very material, relating to the meeting at the Cockpit, to communicate the King's speech, the day before the session, where I think you must preside."<sup>1</sup> The advice here given by the old Minister to Pelham to preside at the meetings was clearly conveyed with the object of inducing him to emphasise his leadership by presiding. What was the custom then remained the custom so long as there were such things as Cockpit meetings. Unless prevented by illness, the head of the Ministry was in the chair at these pre-Parliamentary assemblages, and it was by him usually that the terms of the speech were made known, with such explanations as were deemed necessary. It would appear from a statement in a life of Lord Chatham published immediately after his death, that the Peers had a separate gathering. Referring to the meeting of Parliament on November 25th, 1762, the writer says: "In the evening of the day preceding the meeting of Parliament, the members of the House of Commons met as usual at the Cockpit. Mr. Fox took the chair and produced to the

Chancellor, "the King produced a transcript in his own hand with several alterations, and in particular an assurance that he would agree to no peace until all the allies were satisfied." This course, says the author, was strenuously opposed by the Pelhams, and "it was, not without great and undisguised reluctance on the part of the King, reduced to the simple avowal that his Majesty would not abandon his allies." Still, the change was made, and in that circumstance we have a significant illustration of the development of the speech from a personal expression of the Royal wishes into a Ministerial declaration of policy.

<sup>1</sup> "Pelham Correspondence," vol. i. p. 35.

company a paper which he only called a *speech*, and which, he said, he would as usual read to them. He afterwards produced an *address* which he read; and then said that Lord Carysfort and Lord Charles Spencer had been so blind as to undertake to move and second that address. The same ceremony is observed in respect to the House of Lords. The speech is read by some peer who is supposed to conduct the business of that House. The manager of the House of Commons takes the chair at the Cockpit." An allusion in the "Chatham Correspondence" to a meeting in 1770, where an attendance of one hundred and seventy-nine is described as "a very moderate one," appears to show that the muster was customarily a full one. Nor, it appears from an entry in Lord Colchester's Diary, was the gathering exclusively one of legislators. Says this writer, under date December 19th, 1798: "Went to the Cockpit in the evening to hear the King's speech read. Two-thirds of the room were filled with strangers and blackguard news-writers." Clear proof is here afforded that the once select gatherings of Ministerialists had degenerated into a miscellaneous public assembly, to which almost any one who took the trouble to attend was admitted. Probably from this cause the custom was about this time discontinued. In "Fox's Correspondence" the editor (Lord Holland) mentions the years 1794 or 1795 as the date of the last gathering; but Lord Colchester makes it clear that the assemblies were held subsequently for several years. There is, however, no reason to suppose that they outlived the eighteenth century.

When the Cockpit ceased to be a rallying point for Ministerialists on the eve of the meeting of Parliament, other means were adopted to secure the ends sought by these assemblages. Some time afterwards came into existence the system of full-dress dinners given by leaders of both political parties to their most important supporters in the two Houses. At these functions, when the duties of hospitality had been discharged, the host of the evening was accustomed to read to his guests the terms of the Royal speech, a draft copy of



From an engraving after the drawing by Gustave Janet.

THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY QUEEN VICTORIA, JANUARY 31ST, 1856.  
The Prince Consort is on the Queen's left and the Prince of Wales (H.M. the King) on the right.

which was in his possession. Then there would be informal talk upon the principal point touched upon, with consultations as to the best means of meeting attacks, or, in the case of the Opposition, of making them. In this way both parties were fully prepared for the political fray into which the debate on the address invariably resolves itself. The arrangements sketched continue to the present day. In four centres, at least, on the night before the Parliamentary machine is set going at Westminster, a dignified company gathers around the festive board, and, under the stimulating influences of hospitality gracefully dispensed, is made acquainted with the terms of the Ministerial programme of the session. In some instances a stately reception follows the dinner, and all the great political and social world assembles in the ornate saloons of the statesman who happens to be at the head of his party in either House, to exchange confidences as to the prospects of the session, and, what is not less important in many eyes, to discuss the promise of the season. The next morning, when the public opens its paper at the breakfast-table, it finds set forth in discreet language a fairly complete sketch of what the speech to be delivered some hours later

is to contain. How it is done only editors know, and wild horses, of course, would not extract a confession from them; but we may shrewdly guess that the ubiquitous representatives of the Press who found their way into the old Cockpit meetings—much to Lord Colchester's disgust—are not very far off when disclosures are being made, under the strict seal of confidence, to the men of both parties. It should be stated for the sake of strict accuracy that in the two last sessions of Parliament the customary inspiration has been denied the editor, and as a consequence the newspapers have lacked the mysteriously concocted advance sketches of the Royal speech.

From the framing of the Royal speech to its delivery is only a step, but it is a most important step. Before it can be accomplished some highly important preliminaries have to be discharged. This is always the case; but when, as has happened in the two most recent



THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY QUEEN VICTORIA, JANUARY 21ST, 1856.

The Speaker of the House of Commons at the Bar of the House of Lords.



sessions, the monarch attends to open Parliament in person, the introductory ceremonies are immensely increased in significance and interest. From a State ceremony the function develops into a grand Royal pageant with all the picturesque adjuncts which belong to a monarchy whose traditions go back the best part of a thousand years. Taking their seats in the gorgeous State carriage, resplendent in gilt and colour, and with the Royal Crown glittering at the apex of its rounded roof, the King and Queen in their regal robes are conveyed through the crowded streets from Buckingham Palace to Westminster. The eight cream-coloured ponies drawing the Royal carriage excite much admiration, and a magnificent escort of Life Guards, with cuirasses flashing in the sunlight and plumes nodding in the air, lends an added element of beauty to the scene. Thunders of applause go up and all hats are lifted



THE ROYAL ENTRANCE TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

The great gateway at the foot of the Victoria Tower which is the principal means of access to the Houses of Parliament.

as the dazzling *cortège* sweeps majestically onward to the Houses of Parliament. It was not always so, as the Parliamentary annals plainly show. On the very first occasion (1762) that this superb State coach, which has attracted so many admiring comments, was used, there was a dangerous disturbance which went near to seriously embarrassing the authorities.<sup>1</sup> Now, the only difficulty encountered is that presented by the multitudinous throng of loyal spectators, who, in their anxiety to acclaim their monarch, give the police and the troops keeping the streets an immensity of trouble. The "thin red (and blue) line," however, is maintained intact. In due course the team of Flemish ponies are pulled up under the great Victoria Tower at the majestic Royal entrance to the Parliamentary building.

Received by the great officers of State their Majesties alight, and, ascending the crimson-carpeted staircase, are escorted to the Royal Robing-Room. Here the procession is formed and with measured tread the Royal couple pass onwards through the Royal Gallery between lines of bowing spectators. Meanwhile, a brilliant gathering is awaiting with eager expectancy the

<sup>1</sup> "Such a mob was perhaps never seen as to-day (November 25th, 1762) between Charing Cross and Westminster Hall. The King's magnificent coach might be supposed to have brought them together, but what kept them there after the coach had gone back is, perhaps, not so satisfactory to think of. In short, Lord Bute was insulted both going and coming from the House, and towards evening some soldiers were called in to support the constables in the discharge of their duty in clearing of the streets, so that the members might get away."—MITCHELL MS.



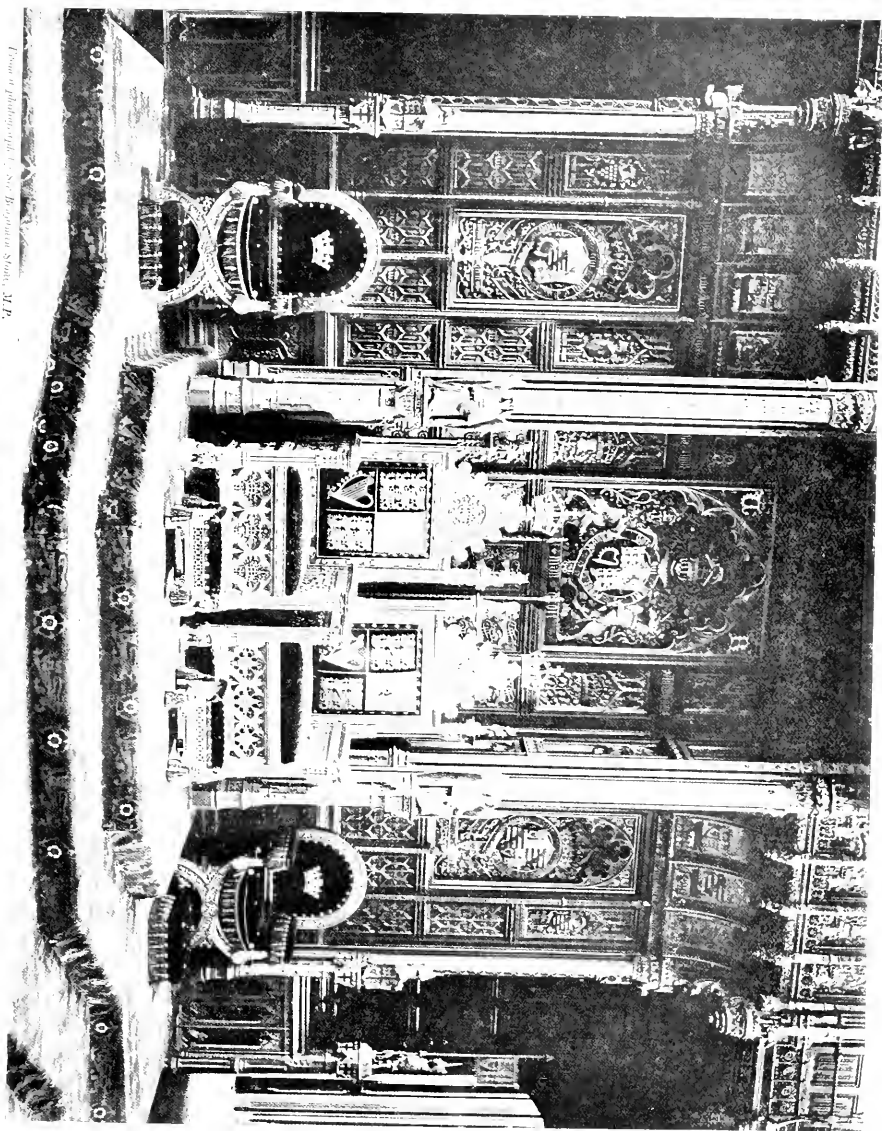
THE ROYAL STAIRCASE, HOUSE OF LORDS.

On reaching the top of this staircase the visitor is on the main level of the Houses of Parliament.

State robes and full-bottomed wigs. Behind the bishops on the right of the throne are the members of the Diplomatic Corps, making together a dazzling *parterre* of colour. The peeresses, restricted in number owing to the revised arrangements for the accommodation of the Commons to be hereafter mentioned, have a place on the back benches, and in their beautiful dresses, adorned by flashing brilliants, contribute an attractive element to an already highly entrancing scene.

One by one the members of the Royal Family arrive and are seated right and left of the throne. Behind the chairs of the princesses the ladies-in-waiting take up their position. Then the sound of the guns firing the Royal salute in St. James's Park comes faintly in from the outer world, noting the arrival of their Majesties. Shortly afterwards the head of the procession is seen coming in through the doorway. Amid a rustle of robes and the dying murmur of suppressed conversation, the gathering rises to its feet. Simultaneously there become visible the four pursuivants—Rouge Croix, Blue Mantle, Rouge Dragon, and Portcullis, in their tabards embroidered in gold and crimson with the Royal arms. Following them are heralds in equally gorgeous costumes. These picturesque survivals of the Middle Ages march slowly to the front of the throne, two by two, make a stately obeisance, and pass to their allotted places by the side. Equerries-in-waiting, gentlemen ushers, and grooms-in-waiting to

advent of the King and his Consort. Every part of this gorgeous "Gilded Chamber" save that about the throne is filled with a magnificently attired audience. Resplendent uniforms of the most famous regiments in Europe vie with the brilliant garb of Eastern diplomats and of distinguished Oriental visitors in richness of colouring. Glittering orders flash on every side, and the ten thousand facets of costly diamond coronets and stars scintillate until the eye almost wearies of their radiance. In the seating of the assembly strict precedence of rank has been observed. On one side of the chamber nearest the throne are the dukes and duchesses; on the other side are seen the spiritual peers in their accustomed places. Along the remaining front rows of seats are the other peers, dressed in scarlet robes trimmed with ermine and white fur. Upon the floor of the House two rows of seats are occupied by the judges of the High Court, all attired in their crimson



*From a photograph by Sir Benjamin Stone, B.P.*

THE ROYAL THRONE, INTERIOR OF LOURDS.

One of the most beautiful views taken in Sir Benjamin Stone for the National Photographic Record Society's collection in the British Museum.



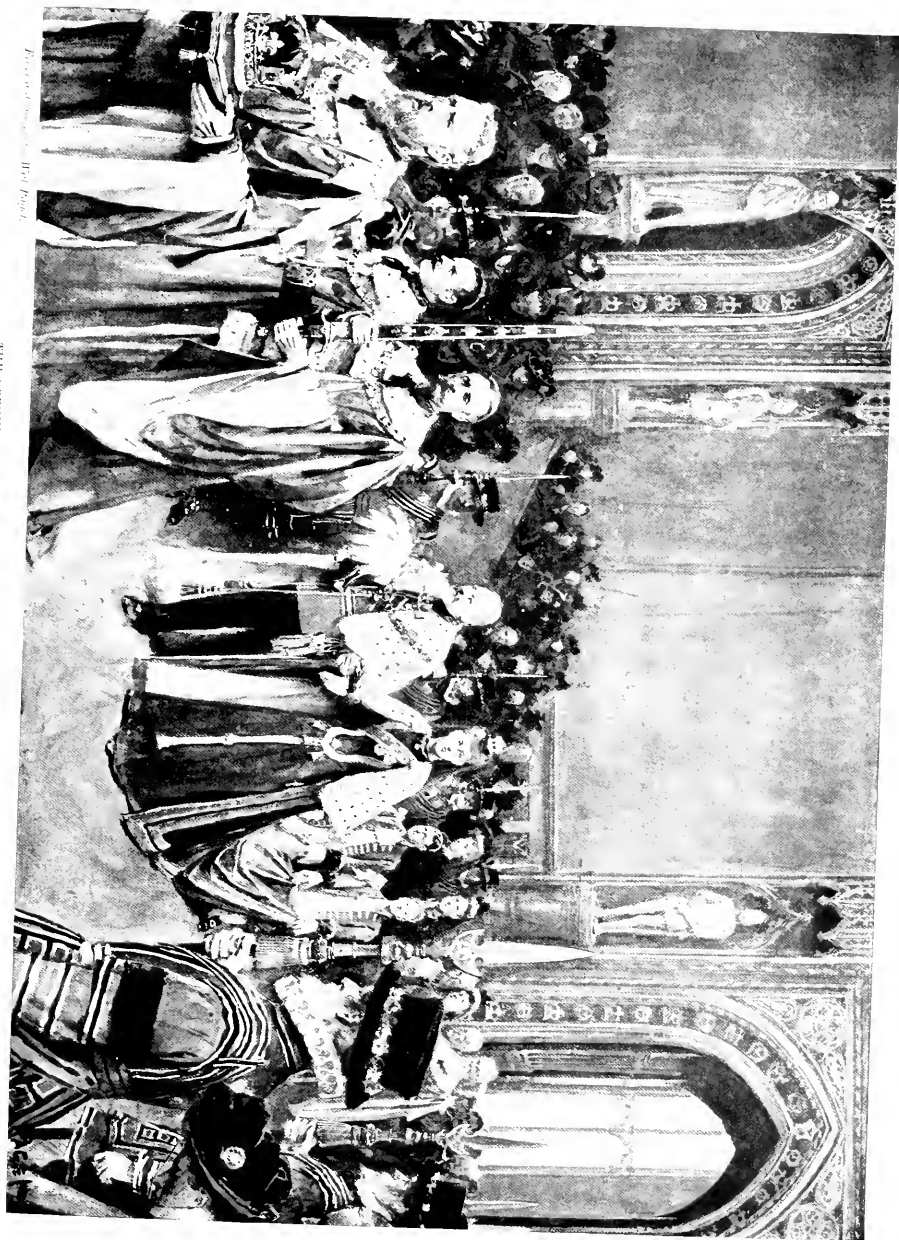
*From a drawing by A. D. McBratney.*

THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD SEARCHING THE VAULTS ON THE MORNING OF THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

Marshal and the Lord Great Chamberlain—the Marquis of Cholmondeley having succeeded to the latter office upon the accession of the King. These two great officers take up their allotted places. Three of the most interesting personages now enter. The Marquis of Londonderry bears the Sword of State, holding it aloft with both hands; the long heavy weapon is in its sheathed scabbard of crimson velvet encircled with gold metal plates. Then follows the Duke of Devonshire, Lord President of the Council, carrying in his two hands a cushion of crimson velvet edged with gold trimmings; upon the cushion is the Imperial Crown glittering with its rubies, emeralds, sapphires, pearls, and diamonds—priceless jewels and gems numbering upwards of three thousand. Following the Lord President comes the premier marquis of England, Lord Winchester, who by hereditary right carries the Cap of Maintenance or Dignity upon the top of a short white staff.

The pageant is now near its completion as their Majesties King Edward and Queen Alexandra enter, full of dignity, in their State robes, with long trains held up by youthful pages of honour dressed in scarlet. Hand in hand the King and his Royal Consort walk up the steps to the Royal chairs, and the King conducts his popular Queen to her seat, and she,

his Majesty precede the entrance of the Comptroller and Treasurer of the Household, these two officers each carrying a white wand. Then comes the Private Secretary to the King and Keeper of the Privy Purse in full Court costume, followed closely by the great officers of State who are members of the Government and peers of the realm. The Marquis of Salisbury, Prime Minister and Lord Privy Seal, wearing his robes of a peer, bows right and left as he passes the throne, the Royal ladies on either side returning the salutation. The Lord High Chancellor follows the Prime Minister and takes up his position at the right of the throne. The "Keeper of the King's Conscience" plays an important part in the proceedings later on. Quickly follows General Sir Michael Biddulph in his military uniform, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod (the ebony staff he carries will soon be used to demand admittance to the Commons House). Norroy, representing Garter King-at-Arms, passes by the front of the throne, his gorgeous tabard attracting much attention, and he is followed by the hereditary holders of two of the great offices of the State—the Duke of Norfolk as Earl



*From the Illustrated London News*

THE OPENING OF KING EDWARD'S FIRST PARLIAMENT, FEBRUARY, 1901.  
The Prince of Wales stands to the right of the King.

with womanly grace, kisses the hand of his Majesty before releasing it. The King then seating himself upon his throne to the right of the Queen, with a motion of the hand commands the assemblage to be seated. A slight pause, and the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod is despatched to summon the faithful Commons to attend the King. There is little need for the official reminder, as, thanks to the arrangements made to obviate the disorderly and undignified scramble for places which until this year (1902) marked the advent of the members of the popular chamber, the positions allotted to this section of the Legislature are already filled. The Speaker, however, appears in full state at the Bar, with the Sergeant-at-Arms and a proper escort of leading members. Now the Lord Chancellor, bending low, hands to the King a copy of the Royal speech, which his Majesty reads in a clear, resonant voice heard in every part of the chamber. At the conclusion of the speech the King resumes his seat, the Speaker, with a profound obeisance, withdraws, and soon the brilliant pageant is at an end.

The ceremonies which mark the close of a Parliamentary session are, when the Sovereign elects to be present, from a spectacular point of view very similar to those which accompany its opening. It has been the custom, however, in later years for the Royal speech which marks the prorogation to be delivered by commission. The proceedings are usually purely formal, and are only participated in by a handful of legislators who have been detained reluctantly at their posts by business or official duties. For a great many years Ministers were in the habit of celebrating their release from sessional cares by dining together at the Ship Hotel at Greenwich. These "whitebait dinners," as they were termed, are traditionally believed to have originated in a friendly custom which Pitt had of dining with Sir Robert Preston, a wealthy merchant who sat for Dover at the close of the eighteenth century. The place of meeting at first was the host's residence at Dagenham, in Essex; but as this proved inconvenient, the venue was changed to Greenwich, then a popular resort for diners. Gradually what was a purely private function became widened into a semi-public and entirely political fixture. So it continued until 1868, when Mr. Gladstone discontinued it. There was a revival of the feast in 1874 by Mr. Disraeli; but the fashion was not congenial to the modern spirit of Parliamentary life, which is to scamper off to the country the moment that the business at Westminster is over. After lingering on for some years, it finally flickered out during Mr. Gladstone's second Administration.



*From "The King's Gallery,"*

KING EDWARD GOING TO OPEN HIS FIRST PARLIAMENT.

The procession passing down Whitehall.

THE MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII ABOUT TO READ HIS SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS ON THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT, JANUARY, 1902.





## CHAPTER XXVI.

### PARLIAMENT IN BEING: THE SPEAKER.

It is difficult in these days to imagine a Parliament without a Speaker. He is the keystone of the whole edifice. Remove him and the entire constitutional structure collapses like a house of cards. Yet there was a period when the Parliamentary authority contrived to do its business in ignorance of the virtues which repose in the great office—perhaps the most dignified position open to the ambitious Briton. True, that was a very long time ago, when the country managed to get on without a good many things that are now deemed indispensable. Still, it is worth remembering that, ancient as the Speakership is and respectable as are its traditions, it was a development of the constitutional system and not, as many of the great public offices are, of antecedent origin.

Authorities are sharply divided as to when the Speaker first made his appearance upon the Parliamentary scene. In one quarter, as we have already seen in the opening chapter, an attempt has been made, not without plausibility, to discover a Speaker in a Parliament of Edward I. Other experts fix the creation of the office much later. The truth probably is that both to a certain extent are right. There were persons chosen to voice the general sentiments of the Commons in the very earliest councils of the Norman Kings, but their duties were those rather of the foreman of a jury than the presiding head of a deliberative body. They were mouthpieces in the strictest sense of the word. Upon them alone devolved the right of expressing the popular view as to the demands, usually of a financial character, made by the Crown.

The name which first appears upon the ancient Parliament rolls in this character is that of Peter de Montfort, who, in the forty-fourth year of Henry III.'s reign (1269), appended his signature to the refusal of Parliament to suffer the recall of Adomar, the Bishop-elect of Winchester. No other occupant of the office is met with in the records for many years, and for this and other reasons it is conjectured that the position did not acquire real permanence until the two Houses commenced to sit apart from each other, and the necessity arose for some intermediary. However this may be, it is only when we reach 1377, near the end of the reign of Edward III., that we come upon a regular line of Speakers. In that year, we are told, Sir Thomas Hungerford was appointed *parlour*, or "mouth," of the House, and thereafter we meet with successive appointments to the Chair. They were made yearly at the outset, and when, as in 1377, there were two Parliaments within the twelve months, a separate Speaker



WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM.

The great Bishop of Winchester, who, as Chancellor, exercised powerful influence in the later Parliaments of Edward III.



was nominated for each. The rule of fresh blood obtained for many years. In fact, the practice of giving a certain permanency to the office, and dismissing the occupant when increasing years or infirmity compel him to resign with a peerage and a handsome pension, is comparatively a modern one.

Of the manner of the election of Speaker in remote times we have evidence when we reach the appointment of Sir James Pickering, who served in 1378. The candidate selected by the Commons was presented for the King's approval. Arrived in the Royal presence, he requested that "if he should utter anything to the damage, slander, or disgrace of the King or his crown, or in lessening the honour and estates of the great Lords, it might not be taken notice of by the King, and that the Lords would pass it by as if nothing had been said; for the Commons highly desired to maintain the

honour and estate of the King; as also to preserve the reverence due to the Lords on all points." The record proceeds to say that, after this, on the part of the Commons, "he humbly thanked the King for his promise to preserve the good laws and customs of the kingdom, and to punish whosoever should act against them; the Commons kneeling on the ground and praying God that they might be put in due execution." In this quaint account—the first recorded—of the election of a *parlour* in Richard II.'s reign, we have the germ of the ceremony of inducting a Speaker as it is arranged to-day, only we have departed, fortunately, a long way from the abject spirit in which "the Nether House" in those remote days sought the Royal sanction in their nomination.

"With bated breath and whispering humbleness" the popular representatives of mediæval times approached the throne. They seemed to take a real pleasure in grovelling. Thus, we are told of Sir John Bussey, who was Speaker in 1394, that he was not satisfied with the customary titles of honour of the King, "but invented unusual terms and such epithets as were rather agreeable to the Divine Majesty of God than to any earthly potentate." There was an improvement on this in 1401, when, on the last day of the session, the Commons "all knelt



*From a picture in the National Portrait Gallery.*

SIR JOHN POPHAM.

Speaker of the House of Commons in 1581. Subsequently, as Chief Justice of the King's Bench, he presided at the trials of Sir Walter Raleigh and of the Gunpowder Plot conspirators.



From the painting by Sir Peter Leys, *National Portrait Gallery*.

SIR HARBOTTE GRIMSTON, BART.

Speaker of the "Healing Parliament," which restored Charles II. in 1660.

before the King, and humbly besought him to pardon them if through ignorance they might have offended."

At the same time the Speaker made what is called a "long preaching," comparing the beginning and ending of the Parliament to the sacrifice of the Mass. But there were occasions when the sturdy, self-reliant spirit of the race manifested itself. One of these was when Sir John Tiptoft, the first Speaker of the reign of Henry IV., having asked to be excused on account of his youth and been refused, lectured the monarch in open Parliament with quite youthful audacity. He "expressed surprise at his excuse not being received, and told the monarch plainly that his house was far more chargeable, yet less honourable, than that

of any of his progenitors." The King must have been aghast at such insolence, but he does not appear to have been moved by the indiscretion to withdraw his refusal of the plea. Even more surprising in its boldness was the conduct of an earlier occupant of the Chair (Sir Peter de la Mare), who denounced in scathing terms Edward III.'s partiality for the celebrated favourite, Alice Perrers, and was committed a close prisoner to Nottingham Castle for his pains. These, however, were but isolated instances of independence of spirit.

The language used by the Commons became, if anything, more servile as the days of the popular chamber lengthened. When we reach Tudor times we are brought face to face with some astounding examples of Parliamentary obsequiousness. One Speaker (Sir Thomas Inglefield) in the early part of Henry VIII.'s reign, referred to the youthful monarch's "promising valour, wonderful temperance, divine moderation in justice, and avowed desire of clemency." This was quite put into the shade by the hyperbolic eulogy of a successor in the Chair (Richard Rich), "who compared the King for justice and prudence to Solomon, for strength and fortitude to Samson, and for beauty and comeliness to Absalom." The palmy period of Parliamentary sycophancy, however, was the reign of Elizabeth, when the Queen's notorious vanity was pandered to to an extent which even disgusted the Royal lady herself, ample as her capacity for absorbing flattery was. One specimen of this fulsome oratory must suffice. It was delivered by Speaker Crooke, in an address of thanks to the Queen for withdrawing her grants of



THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR ONSLOW,

One of the greatest of the line of Speakers. He occupied the Chair in January, 1777, until March, 1780, presiding over six successive Parliaments.

monopolies. "All of us, in all duty and thankfulness," said the Speaker, "do throw down ourselves at the feet of your Majesty. Neither do we present our thanks in words of any outward thing, which can be no sufficient retribution for so great goodness, but, in all duty and thankfulness, prostrate at your feet, we present our most loyal and thankful hearts, even the last drop of blood in our hearts, and the last spirit of breath in our nostrils, to be poured out, to be breathed up for your safety." "Then, after three low reverences made," says the reporter in an appropriate winding up of the incident, "he with the rest kneeled down."

If the earlier Speakers assumed a Uriah Heep demeanour in approaching the monarch, it should, in justice to their consistency, be stated that they were quite as painfully humble in their dealings with their fellow-Commoners. A tradition grew up at the periodical elections to the Chair, of the nominee of the House excusing himself for accepting the office on the



THE SPEAKER'S HOUSE: RIVER FRONT.

The official home of the Speaker in the old Houses of Parliament destroyed by fire in 1834.

plea of his incapacity for the position. Entirely insincere in thought and expression, these utterances leave a shiny trail all through the pages of Parliamentary history, making us almost doubt whether the men who spoke these things could actually have accomplished the part we know they played in the building up of the greatest Constitution known to history. There is one classic description of an election of a Speaker in the thirty-ninth year of Elizabeth's reign, which must be given, not only for the light it throws on the point we are elucidating, but because of the diverting glimpse it gives of the manners of the Tudor Parliament men. D'Ewes and Townsend are the reporters. Their accuracy may be safely relied on, for they were nothing if not painstaking. They show the House assembled on a certain day for the election of Speaker. First there is a speech from Sir William Knolls, the Comptroller of the Household. Said this worthy, "I will deliver my opinion unto you who is most fit for this place, being a member of this House, and those good abilities which I know to be in him. Here he made a little pause, and the House hawked and spat, and after silence

made, he proceeded.) Unto this place of dignity and calling, in my opinion (here he stayed a little), Mr. Sergeant Yelverton (looking unto him) is the fittest man to be preferred (after which words Mr. Yelverton blushed and put off his hat, and after sat bareheaded), for I know him to be a man wise and learned, secret and circumspect, religious and faithful, no way disable, but every way able to supply this place." This appeared to be the general view. "The whole House," proceeds the narration, "cried, 'Aye, aye, aye, let him be!' and the Master Comptroller made a low reverence and sat down; and after a little pause and silence Mr. Sergeant Yelverton rose, and, after a very humble reverence, said: 'Whence your unexpected choice of me to be your mouth or Speaker did proceed I am utterly ignorant. If from my merits, strange it were that few deserts should purchase suddenly so great an honour. Not from my ability doth this your choice proceed, for well known it is to a great number in this place now assembled that my estate is nothing correspondent for the maintenance of this dignity; for my father dying left me a younger brother, nothing to me but my bare annuity. Then growing to man's estate and some small practice of the law, I took a wife, by whom I have had many children, the keeping of us all being a great impoverishment to my estate, and the daily living of us all nothing but my early industry. Neither from my person nor nature doth this choice arise, for he that supplieth this place ought to be a man big and comely, stately and well-spoken, his voice great, his courage majestic, his nature haughty, and his purse plentiful and heavy; but, contrarily, the stature of my body is small, myself not so well-spoken, my voice low, my carriage lawyer-like and of the common fashion, my nature soft and bashful, my purse thin, light, and never yet plentiful.'" It is sad to know that, despite these manifold defects, the worthy Yelverton was elected to the Chair and filled it with moderate success.

This style of hollow self-deprecation, after a long vogue, was finally laid aside for a more dignified and self-respecting method of election. The dawn of a new spirit is seen in the records of the appointment of Sir Heneage Finch, who was elected Speaker in the first Parliament of Charles I. "Since," observed this worthy, "we all stand for hundreds and thousands, for figures and cyphers, as your Majesty, the supreme and sovereign auditor, shall please to place and value us, and, like coin to pass, are made current by your Royal stamp and impression only, I shall neither disable nor undervalue myself, but with a faithful and cheerful heart apply myself with the best of my strength and abilities to the performance of this weighty and public charge." Not less manly and dignified was the conduct on election of Sergeant Glanvill, who presided over "the Short Parliament" of 1640. His address to the King on his presentation for acceptance was couched in elevated language, and when the Royal



THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES ABBOT, FIRST LORD COLCHESTER,  
Speaker of the House of Commons from 1802 to 1817.

assent had been given he at once submitted, observing: "My profession hath taught me that from the highest judge and the highest seat of justice there lyeth no writ of error, no appeal." When the Restoration came, with its extravagant loyalty and excessive deference to Royal authority, there was a lapse into the old fashion of stilted self-depreciation and fulsome adulation. But the lesson of independence had sunk too deeply into the minds of Parliamentarians during the Commonwealth to permit of more than a temporary display of the ancient quality. Ere the reign had closed, a Speaker of the House of Commons, in the person of Sir Edward Seymour, was found addressing the King in language of a character which indicated unmistakably the independent temper of "the faithful Commons." "I am come hither," he said, when he went to the King for his approval on his being nominated in 1679 a second time for office—"I am come hither for your Majesty's approbation, which, if your Majesty please to grant, I shall do the Commons and you the best service I can." Seymour, in the previous session, had taken a leading part in opposing the King's unconstitutional acts, and Charles did not mean to allow him to remain in a position in which he was able to continue the annoyance. He consequently put the Lord Chancellor up to say that he disapproved the choice, as he was entitled to do under his prerogative. Indignant at the slight cast upon them, the House of Commons spent several days in discussing the best means of asserting the right they claimed to choose their own Speaker. The King, however, was obdurate, and ultimately the Commons reluctantly ended the crisis by appointing Sergeant Gregory as their Speaker, a choice that was immediately ratified by the King.

Coincident with the constitutional changes which followed the Revolution of 1688 was a great enhancement of the dignity of the Speaker's office. The occupant of the Chair was no longer the creature of the Court or the subservient tool of a faction. He was the recognised head of the popular branch of the Legislature, and on this account fit to take rank with the highest in the land. When the Convention Parliament assembled at the Banqueting Hall, Whitehall, to offer William and Mary the Crown, Mr. Powle, the Speaker, occupied one of the most prominent positions, and in the subsequent procession through the streets to proclaim the new monarchs his carriage actually headed the procession, taking precedence even of that of the Earl Marshal. Still more eloquent of the increased importance and independence of the position is the circumstance that in 1700 Sir Thomas Lyttleton, whose candidature was strongly supported by the King, was defeated in a full House by fourteen votes. It was, however,

left to Arthur Onslow, who presided over the deliberations of the House of Commons for thirty-four years, to bring the office to its greatest position of authority. Of this great Speaker's career we shall have something to say in a later chapter, when we come to deal with the personal side of the Speakership. But we may here appropriately cite an anecdote related by Hatsell which illustrates the high sense entertained by Onslow of the dignity of his office. The story goes that Lord Southampton (then Colonel Fitzroy) being in attendance upon the King's person as one of the grooms of the bedchamber, and coming in late to make a quorum, was reprimanded by the Speaker for his dilatoriness, whereupon Colonel Fitzroy excused



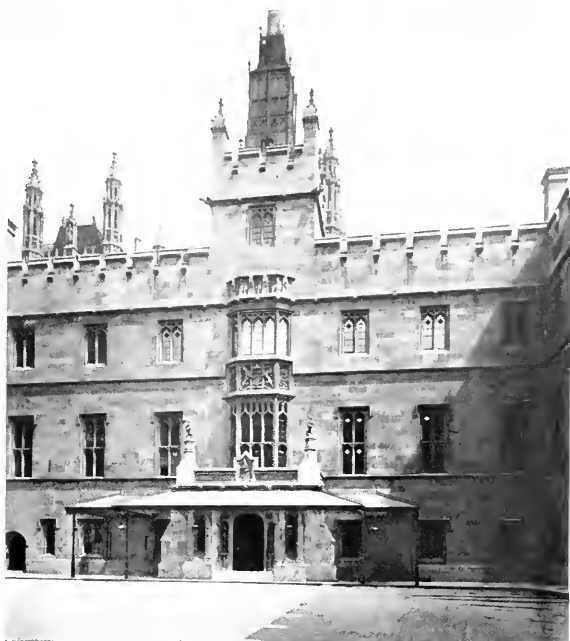
THE RIGHT HON. JAMES ABERCROMBY

Speaker from 1807 to 1820.

himself by saying that he was in waiting upon his Majesty. "Sir," said Mr. Onslow in a loud and commanding voice, "don't tell me of waiting; this is your place to attend in; this is your first duty." Animated by this high, not to say somewhat haughty, spirit, Onslow drew to the Chair in the course of his long tenure of it that feeling of respect—almost of veneration—which still attaches to it. After his time the office had its vicissitudes. It was sometimes the sport of faction—occasionally it was in weak hands; but never again was it corruptly or unworthily filled.

A few words upon the question of the emoluments of the Speakership may not be devoid of interest and instruction. In the earliest period of which we have authentic records of payments, the office appears to have carried with it a salary of £5 a day—a by no means extravagant stipend even when the greater value of money in those days is borne in mind. After the Restoration, Speakers received £1,000 as equipment money on their appointment, and a fee of £5 on every private bill that was introduced into the House. These irregular payments were highly unsatisfactory from many points of view, and they were finally swept away by an Act of Parliament which established the principle of a fixed salary. By the provisions of an Act of William IV., the salary of the Speaker was fixed at £6,000 per annum, to be paid, free of all taxes, out of the Consolidated Fund; and later, during the same reign, the salary was reduced to £5,000 with the appointment of an official secretary, to receive £500 per annum. The allowance of £1,000 as equipment money upon first appointment continues, but a grant of 2,000 ounces of plate has taken the form of a permanent service, which is supplied with the furniture of the official residence. The supply of two hogsheds of claret has ceased, and the sum of £100 a year allowed for stationery has been discontinued, the State furnishing what is required in this direction.

By customary usage the Speaker, on retirement, receives a pension of £4,000 a year and a peerage. A condition of the grant is that one-half of the annuity shall be suspended during any period that the recipient holds "a place, office, or employment under his Majesty of equal or greater amount of salary, profit, or emolument than the amount of the annuity." Besides these direct personal advantages, the occupant of the Chair has placed at his disposal, for the maintenance of his dignity, the services of a chaplain, a private secretary, and a train-bearer, and there is also a Speaker's Counsel to aid in the unravelling of knotty legal points. Furthermore, there are several pleasant little perquisites attaching to the office, such



THE SPEAKER'S HOUSE.

The main entrance in Speaker's Court, access to which is obtained from New Palace Yard.



*From an engraving published August 16th, 1832.*

"The question is, that I do now leave the Chair. Assuming as you & that opinion, say "Aye"; of the contrary, say "No."

#### "A PARTING COMPLIMENT"

*"To the Right Hon. Charles Manners-Sutton,*

*"Speaker of the House of Commons, in six successive Parliaments, whose list act in his *all-out character* was the *best* which did not give universal satisfaction.*

*"The last Commoner amongst gentlemen, and the first gentleman amongst Commons."*

been made for supplying a Deputy Speaker in case of need, although during the Protectorate temporary Speakers were allowed to act. The custom was, in the event of a Speaker's illness, for the Clerk to inform members of the fact, and for the House thereafter to immediately adjourn. When the Speaker's absence continued for a considerable time, he resigned, and another would be elected with all the formalities, including the permission of the Crown and Royal approval. Upon the return of the first Speaker, the one occupying his place would resign, or become indisposed, and the former re-elected with a repetition of the formal proceedings. In 1853 a Committee considered the subject, and recommended a change in the procedure, and the House resolved to allow the Chairman of Ways and Means to act as Deputy Speaker. Two years later an Act was passed, the provisions of which extended all the powers possessed by the Speaker to his Deputy, whose actions were to be as valid in every respect as those of the Speaker.

At the meeting of the House each day the Speaker proceeds to the House with much formality. Preceded by a messenger is the Sergeant-at-Arms, attired in Court dress and carrying the mace.<sup>1</sup> Then comes Mr. Speaker, attired in Court dress and full wig, his long gown being held up by his train-bearer; and in the rear are the chaplain and the private secretary. Members join the procession upon its way, and walk into the House to prayers. All members and strangers present in the Lobby raise their hats respectfully as Mr. Speaker and his retinue pass along.

<sup>1</sup> The mace has been in use since the Restoration, and bears upon it the initials "C. R."

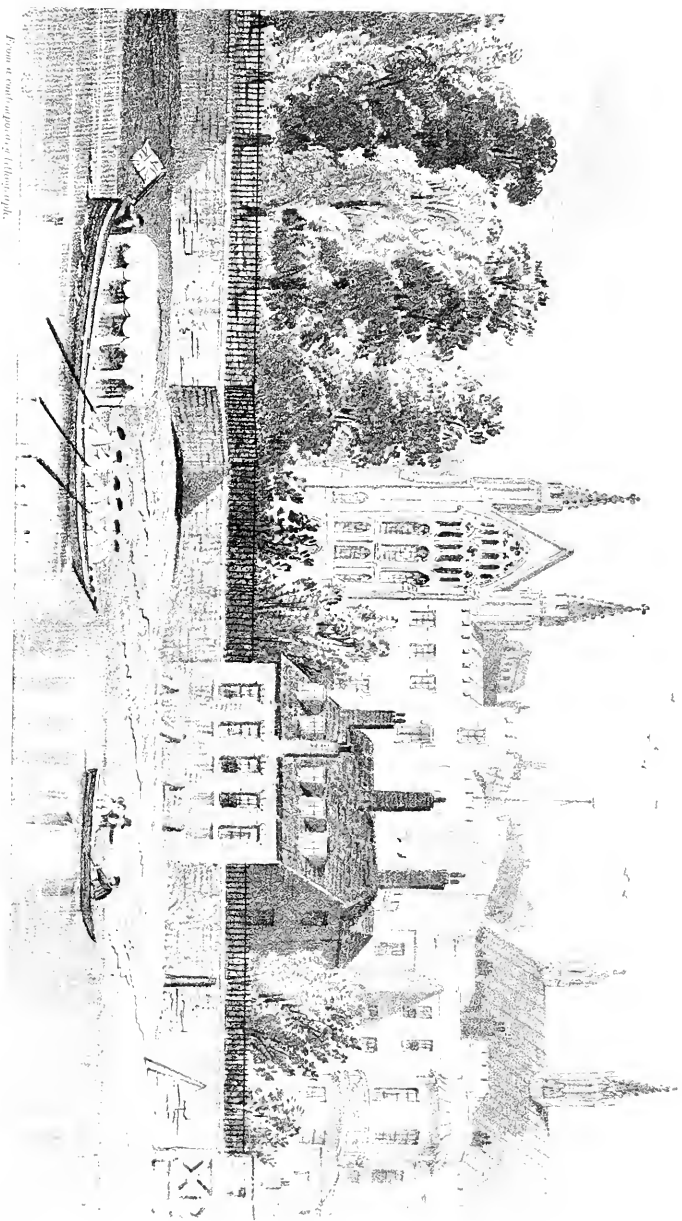
as a buck and a doe, usually sent from the Royal preserves at Windsor, and a width of broadcloth furnished at Christmas by the Cloth-workers' Company. With it all the Speaker cannot in these days of profuse hospitality be said to be highly remunerated. If the social duties at the Speaker's House are at all adequately discharged, the allowance from the Exchequer can scarcely suffice to cover actual expenses.

Many and varied are the duties pertaining to the Chair. Besides acting as president of the popular chamber and the interpreter of its will, the Speaker discharges various important functions. He, as mouthpiece, demands judgment on behalf of the House in cases of impeachment by the Commons. He issues all warrants to execute the orders of the House for the arrest and commitment of offenders. His powers extend to India in certain cases for the examination of witnesses. The Speaker signs, after first perusing, the votes and proceedings of the House, which are printed and circulated daily to members; he approves returns presented to the House before being printed; controls the issue of all Parliamentary papers laid upon the table; sanctions the rules applying to private bill agents, whose duties and responsibilities are governed by Standing Orders; and he has, finally, considerable powers regarding the taxation of costs incurred in this branch of Parliamentary business—the reports of the taxing officers being submitted to him.

Only in modern times has authorised provision



*From a south-western perspective.*



ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, AND THE SPEAKER'S HOUSE.  
A view from the river, taken before the fire of October 16th, 1834.

The arduous character of the duties of the Speakership may be gathered from the brief sketch that has been given of the responsibilities of the Chair. There is, indeed, no great office in the State which makes a heavier call upon the strength of its occupant. The mere physical strain of sitting for many hours at a stretch in one position, with mental faculties alert, is enormous. Only the strongest constitutions can come satisfactorily through such an ordeal. Fortunately the great line of modern Speakers to whom the observations mainly apply—for the practice of long and late sittings is an evil which has become acute only in comparatively recent times—have been men as renowned for their bodily endurance as for their high intellectual and moral qualities. Cases of actual breakdown have been rare, and there are extraordinarily few instances in which serious indisposition has interfered with the regular discharge of the Speaker's office. Still, even Jove sometimes nods, and there have been occasions when, amid "the dreary drip of dilatory declamation," tired nature has asserted itself, and the weighted eyelids of First Commoners have closed in slumber. It is to one of these episodes that Wentworth Mackworth Praed, who was a member of the short-lived Ministry of Sir Robert Peel known as "the Hundred Days," refers in these stanzas:—

Sleep, Mr. Speaker; it's only fair,  
If you don't in your bed, you should in your chair,  
Longer and longer still they grow,  
Tory and Radical, Aye and No,  
Talking by night and talking by day;  
Sleep, Mr. Speaker, sleep while you may.

Sleep, Mr. Speaker; sweet to men  
Is the sleep that cometh but now and then,  
Sweet to the sorrowful, sweet to the ill,  
Sweet to the children that work in the mill,  
You have more need of sleep than they;  
Sleep, Mr. Speaker, sleep while you may.

After all, however, a tendency to somnolence has been one of the least conspicuous of the weaknesses that have marked the occupancy of the Chair at any period. The Speaker's eye has sometimes been accused of a lack of impartiality by heated partisans, but its vigilance has rarely been called in question.



"CAUGHT NAPPING."

An amusing incident in the House of Commons in 1892, in which a drowsy Chairman of Committees is detected sleeping during the progress of a debate in Committee, over which he is presiding.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### *SPEAKERS—FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS.*

THE history of the Speakership which has been sketched in general outline in the preceding chapter would not be complete without some more detailed reference to the personal aspects of the office. Many great names are associated with the Chair—names which have left an indelible mark upon the annals of the country. Moreover, the position is peculiarly one in which individual characteristics have strikingly manifested themselves, and it is only by the biographical process that can be properly elucidated the more notable incidents which have accompanied the development of the prerogatives and powers of the Chair. It is, perhaps, fortunate, in view of the exigencies of space, that the earlier names which figure upon the Speakers' roll were those of men mostly undistinguished. Worthy knights of the shire, commonsens temporarily withdrawn from an honourable obscurity by a fleeting popularity, and mediocre lawyers using their position for purposes of personal aggrandisement—such was the character of the vast majority of those whom the House delighted to honour in the first two centuries of its existence. Where fame came to any of them, it was mostly due to their fortuitous association with some historic event which had passed outside the walls of the Parliament House.

A case in point is that of Sir Henry Redford, who, in the fourth year of the reign of Henry IV. (1403), submitted what was one of the first, if not absolutely the first, votes of thanks tendered by Parliament to a victorious general. The circumstances of this incident in Parliamentary history are so singular that they may be related in the quaint phraseology of the ancient record. According to this, the Commons, on October 16th, "by the mouth of their Speaker gave the King their most humble thanks for his many valiant exploits—namely, for his last expedition into Scotland and for his three several journeys into Wales since the former, wherein," continues the chronicler, "they took occasion to praise the valour of the Prince, and forgot not to mention the noble service performed by Lord Thomas, the King's second son, in Ireland. As for the victory in Scotland, they humbly hoped that by good policy it might be made to turn to the advantage and ease of the Commons, and because in that battle the Earl of Northumberland behaved gallantly they prayed the King to give him thanks." A curious sequel to this episode was supplied four days later, when, "the King seated on his throne in the Lords, the Commons being then assembled," the Earl of Northumberland and his son, Harry Hotspur, brought before the King the leading prisoners taken in the bloody fight at Halidon Hill, where ten thousand Scots were slain. "These prisoners," says the historian, "on coming into the King's presence kneeled three times: first at the door of the Whitehall within the King's Palace, then in the midst of the Hall, and, lastly, before the throne; and whilst they were still kneeling Sir Adam Forester, in the name of them all,



CARDINAL WOLSEY,

Whose visit to the House of Commons elicited a memorable reply from Sir Thomas More, the then Speaker.

humbly prayed the King that they might be entertained according to the course of war, which the King, because they were taken fighting valiantly in the field, readily granted. Finally, they were committed to the care of the Steward of the Household to await the King's pleasure."

A fifteenth-century Speaker whose illustrious name entitles him to a word of passing comment was Thomas Chaucer, who officiated in the Parliament of 1408. He was a near relative of the poet, but appears to have had little in common with "The Father of English Poetry." About the only fact of interest associated with him was the equivocal remark of the King when he made the usual protestation on election, "that he expected the Commons would speak no unbecoming words, or attempt anything that was not consistent with decency." A second name of high distinction in the country's annals is that of John Russel, who, elected Speaker on October 14th, 1423, laid the enduring foundations of the great house of Bedford. But these are only chance landmarks in a barren land.

When we approach the troubled period of the Wars of the Roses we find the Speakership a dangerous office for those who filled it. William Tresham, who occupied the Chair in 1439 and again in 1447, was barbarously murdered on the King's highway not far from Northampton, as he went to meet the Duke of York. He had taken an active part in the impeachment of the Duke of Suffolk, and it is conjectured, probably correctly, that the outrage was in revenge for his official share in that transaction. Not less tragic and even more historic was the fate which awaited Thomas Thorpe, a knight of the shire for Essex, who was elected Speaker in 1452, in the reign of Henry VI. He became involved in the fierce internecine struggle which was raging at the time by seizing, on behalf of the King's party, some warlike stores which the Duke of York had deposited in the palace of the Bishop of Durham. An action for

trespass was brought by the Duke, and the unfortunate Speaker was cast into the Fleet Prison in execution of a decree for damages. The Commons strongly protested against this outrage to their head, urging that he was privileged in what he did "by common custom, time out of memory of man and ever afore these times, used in every of the Parliaments of the King's noble progenitors." The appeal was in vain. Thorpe's imprisonment was made more effective, and a new Speaker was elected in his place by order of the Peers of Parliament. At length the unfortunate upholder of constitutional rights escaped, but only to be recaptured and, by the Duke of York's orders, cast into Newgate. After remaining here for some time he was transferred to the Marshalsea, and finally met his end on the scaffold at Harringay Park, in Middlesex, now one of the most thriving of London's northern suburbs. Sir William Oldhall, another Speaker of this period—he was elected in 1451—was attainted of treason, but appears to have escaped the fate of Thorpe.

Next on the list calling for notice is Thomas Lovell, who may be described as "The Fighting Speaker." Elected on November 7th, 1486, Lovell, as a staunch adherent of Henry VII., in the following year took the field with the King's forces against the Simnel faction, and greatly distinguished himself at the battle of Stoke, receiving for his part in the transaction the honour of the



RICHARD III.

In whose reign was appointed to the Speakership the notorious William Catesby. The bear supporters are noticeable in the coat of arms.



SIR CHRISTOPHER WEAY,

Who was Speaker in 1571

Gloucester (Richard III.). He is traditionally believed to have been an active participator in the murder of the young Princes in the Tower, and at all events had a hand in most of the merciless acts of general policy by which his tyrant master was seated upon the throne. It was in allusion to his influence, with that of Ratcliffe and Lovell, two other of Richard's myrmidons, that Colingburn penned his well-known distich:—

The cat, the rat, and Lovell our dog  
Rule all England under the hog.

The last phrase of the couplet is an allusion to the boar which Richard adopted as one of his supporters. Catesby accompanied his master to Bosworth Field, where he was captured, and from the field of battle sent to the scaffold at Leicester three days later.

Next on our black list we make acquaintance with as pretty a brace of ruffians as are to be met with in the pages of English history. It need scarcely be said that the reference is to Empson and Dudley, the notorious Ministers of Henry VII., whose extortions, even in that age of misgovernment and oppression, were of monstrous import. Sir Richard Empson, who was elected to the Chair in the Parliament of 1491, was of common origin, his father being a sieve-maker at Towcester. He was a man of haughty and overbearing disposition, and for his cruel exactions on behalf of his Royal master was hated by the poor with a poisonous hate. The popular feeling towards him is illustrated by a story narrated by his biographers. It is stated that an old man in Warwickshire, "accounted very judicious in judicial astrology," was one day scoffingly asked by Empson when the sun would change. To this the old man promptly replied: "Even when such a wicked lawyer as you go to heaven."

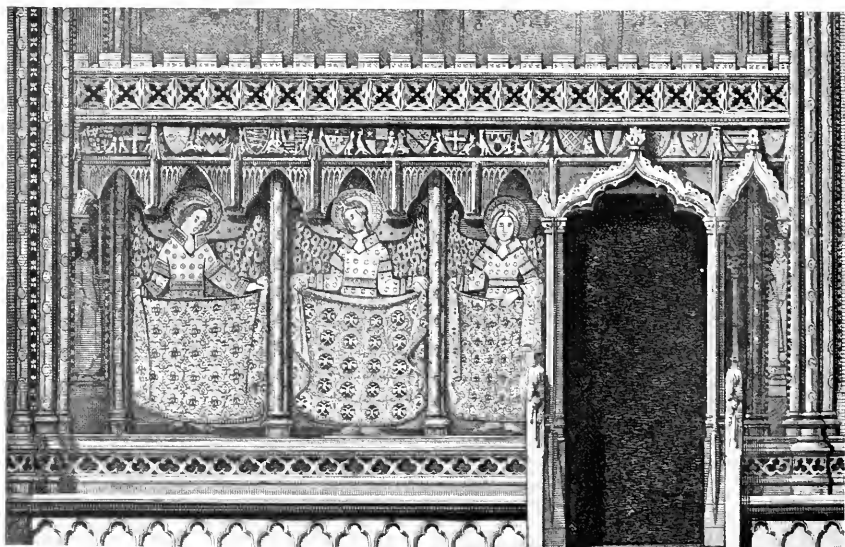
Garter. Engaged on the rebel side in this encounter, which proved so disastrous to the Simnel cause, was Lord Lovell, a kinsman of the Speaker. With the name of this nobleman a tragic legend is associated which is the foundation of the romance of "The Old English Baron" and of that most popular of old-time ballads, "The Mistletoe Bough." The story goes that, flying from the battlefield, Lord Lovell sought refuge in one of his own castles. A faithful retainer received him and conducted him for security to an old cellar. Here for some still unexplained cause he was left and ultimately died of starvation. The mystery of his disappearance was not elucidated until about a century and half ago, when, upon the opening of the vault for some purpose, the skeleton was found.

Leaving the troubled period of the Wars of the Roses, we come across a group of occupants of the Chair whose names have been handed down to infamy. First in order of chronological precedence, if not in moral degradation, is William Catesby, the willing tool of the crafty Duke of

Empson's companion in iniquity, Edward Dudley, who filled the Chair in 1503, was a man of good birth and attainments, but utterly unscrupulous. It was said of his election "that a man may easily guess how absolute the King took himself to be with his Parliament when the creature Dudley, that was so odious to the public, was made Speaker." It is satisfactory to know that a just retribution in the end overtook this precious pair. When Henry VIII. came to the throne in 1560 they were brought to the scaffold to appease the popular anger.

It is refreshing to turn from these unhallowed associations of the Speakership to the recollections which cluster about the illustrious name of Sir Thomas More, to whom Townsend, in his "Memoirs of the House of Commons," refers glowingly, but not, perhaps, untruly, as "the first great man and still the greatest of his race; the first English gentleman who signalised himself as an orator; the first writer of prose which is still intelligible; the first layman Chancellor of England, the celebrated magistracy which has rarely been filled by a more learned, never by a better, man." More's career as a member commenced in the reign of Henry VII. soon after he came of age. His sturdy opposition in the House to the marriage of Princess Margaret with the Scotch King brought him into disgrace at Court, and he was forced into retirement for some years. Finding favour with Henry VIII. he in 1523 returned to Parliament, and was promptly elected Speaker. Soon he was called upon to show that strong independence which was so marked a feature of his character. The King, in desperate need of money, commissioned Wolsey to endeavour to secure assent to an enormous subsidy of £800,000, to be raised by a property tax of a fifth of men's lands and goods. Notice was given to the House of Commons of the projected intrusion, and there was a protracted and earnest debate as to whether the Cardinal should be admitted with a few followers only or with his whole train. Opinion ruled in favour of the former course; but More took a different line in a speech which is a masterpiece of policy.

"Maisters," he said, "forasmuch as my Lord Cardinal lately, as yee woote well, layde to



MURAL PAINTINGS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL.

One of the many beautiful medieval embellishments of the Chapel discovered when the alterations were made to admit the Irish members after the Union.



*From an engraving after Holbein's picture.*

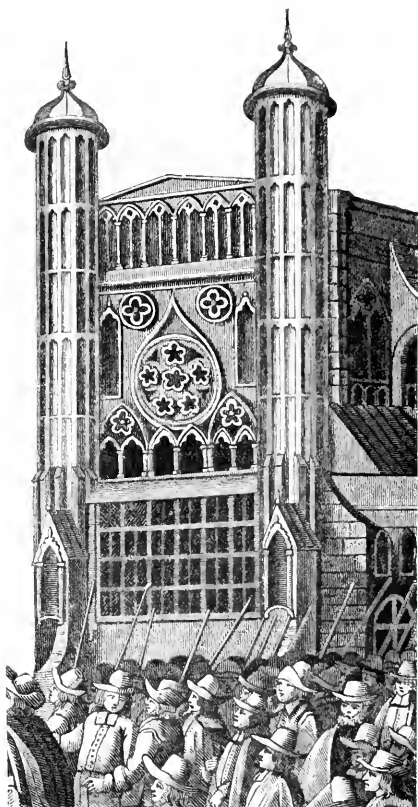
**KING HENRY THE EIGHTH,**

In whose reign the Speakership was degraded by its association with many despotic exercises of the Royal authority.

our charge the lightness of our tongues for things uttered out of this House, it should not in my mind be amisse to receive him with all his pompe; with his maces, his pillars, his poleaxes, his cross, his batte, and the Great Scale too: to the intent that if he finde the like fault with us, then we may lay the blame upon those whom his Grace bringeth with him."<sup>1</sup>

So it was settled that the regal Wolsey should come in full state, and he did so, with results, however, which were very disappointing to his vanity. The House maintained a resolute silence in the face of all his appeals. At length, losing patience, he in imperious language insisted upon a reasonable answer. Then the Speaker, "falling upon his knees with abject humility, excused the silence of the House, abashed," as it was, "at the sight of so noble a personage, who was able to amaze the wisest and most learned men in the realm." Thereafter "with many probable arguments he endeavoured to show the Cardinal that his manner of coming thither was neither expedient nor agreeable to the ancient liberties of the House, and in conclusion told him that, except all the members could put their several thoughts into his head, he alone was unable in so weighty a matter to give his Grace a sufficient answer."

Finding that his entreaties were useless, Wolsey swept out of the House (the Chapter House) in a towering passion. Meeting More a little later at Whitehall, Wolsey said to him: "Would to God you had been at Rome, Sir Thomas, when I made you Speaker!" "Your Grace not offended, so would I, too, my lord," replied the imperturbable More, "for then I should have seen the place I have long desired to visit." The King shared Wolsey's anger at the defeat of his scheme, and he vented it in characteristic style. Sending for Edward Montague, a very influential member of the House of Commons, he greeted that gentleman as he awaited the Royal commands on bended knees with the words: "Ho! man, will they not suffer my bill to pass?" Then, placing his hand on Montague's head, he added sternly, "Get my bill passed by to-morrow, or else to-morrow this head of yours shall be off." This argument, partially at least, succeeded where Wolsey's argument failed. The measure passed, though in a greatly modified form. Some of More's biographers have represented that his attitude on this question of a subsidy was not so firm as it is represented in the account quoted, and that he on the occasion enforced the Cardinal's demands with arguments of his own. It is quite possible that this may have been the case, as More was too keenly alive to the weight of the Royal hand to offend if he could avoid it. Whatever the truth on the point may be, he must be admitted, even by his severest critics, to have behaved in the then circumstances of Parliament with becoming spirit, and a full



*From a seventeenth-century woodcut.*

ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL.

<sup>1</sup> Roger's "Life of More."



appreciation of what was due to the independence of the popular chamber. Still, More's occupancy of the Chair cannot be said to be the portion of his career which reflects the highest lustre upon his name. Most people will prefer to turn from the degenerate legislative era in which he acted as the Commons' mouthpiece to those closing scenes in his eventful life in which a successor of his in the Chair, Sir Richard Rich, played so mean and dishonourable a part. It is a familiar tale, but it will bear repetition.

Imprisoned in the Tower at the behest of the Royal tyrant he had served so well, he was visited one day by Rich. Thereupon a singular colloquy ensued between them. The conversation was opened by Rich: "Forasmuch as it is well known, Mr. More, that you are a man both wise and well learned, as well in the laws of the realm as otherwise, I pray you, sir, let me be so bold as of good will to put you this case: Admit that there were an Act of Parliament made that all the realm should take me for King, would not you, Mr. More, take me for King?" "Yes, sir," said Sir Thomas More, "that would I." "I put the case further," said Mr. Rich: "that there were an Act of Parliament that all the realm should take me for Pope, would you not then take me for Pope?" "For answer," said Sir Thomas, "to your first case, the Parliament may well meddle with the state of temporal princes, but to make answer to your other case I will put you this case: Suppose the Parliament would make a law that God should not be God, would you then, Mr. Rich, say that God should not be God?" "No," said he, "since no Parliament may make such a law, no more (as Mr. Rich reported Sir Thomas should say, but yet he made no such inference as he avoucheth after to Mr. Rich's face) could the Parliament make the King supreme head of the Church." The mean-spirited Rich reported the conversation, and upon it a charge of treason was constructed, leading ultimately to More's execution upon Tower Hill.

The records of Sir Richard Rich's Speakership exhibit him in quite as unfavourable a light as might be anticipated from his treacherous conduct towards More. Soon after he was

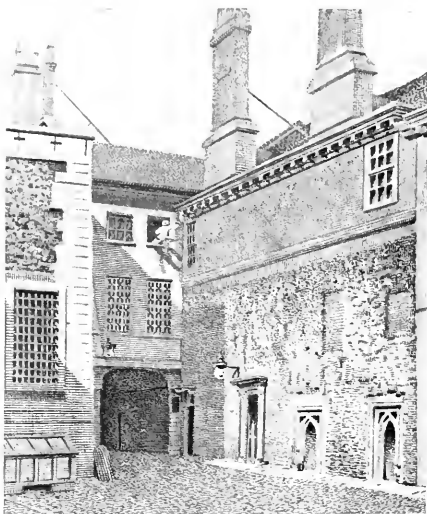
appointed in 1537, the King visited the House of Lords to pass bills that were awaiting the Royal assent. Rich took advantage of the opportunity to deliver a fawning speech in which he likened the King to the sun, "for as the sun," said he, "expels all the noxious vapours which would otherwise be hurtful to us, and by its heat cherishes and brings forth those seeds, plants, and fruits necessary for the support of human life, so this our most excellent Prince takes away by his prudence all those enormities which may hereafter be anyways hurtful to us and our posterity, and takes care to enact such laws as will be a defence to the good and a great terror to evil-doers." The man, no doubt, was a mere creature of the King, and maintained himself in power by pandering to his vicious and tyrannical propensities.

Well worthy to be bracketed with Rich is his immediate successor, Sir Nicholas Hare. This Speaker presided over the historic Parliament which met



SIR ROBERT BELL,

Who succeeded Sir Christopher Wray as Speaker in 1572.



THE SPEAKER'S COURTYARD, FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

The view is interesting as affording a glimpse of the surroundings of the Speaker's residence in the old Palace of Westminster.

during which the Boy King reigned, Mary, of sinister memory, ascended the throne, the degradation of Parliament was intensified, if possible. The lowest depth was reached in 1554-5, when the two Houses, after repealing all the laws of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. relating to the Reformation, at the close of the Parliament went in solemn procession to St. Paul's Cathedral to return thanks for their "conversion" to the Catholic Church. Ninety crosses were borne in the procession, in which figured a hundred and sixteen priests in full vestments. Bishop Bonner carried the pyx under a splendid canopy, and with him were seven other bishops. Behind walked the House of Lords, and then the House of Commons, with its Speaker (Clement Heigham) and the mace. Mass was celebrated in the Cathedral with all the pomp of the Roman ritual as a final act of solemnity to impress the populace with the reality of the change. Yet only a few years passed away before the old laws were re-established and the Reformation was in full blast again, with Parliament as its stoutest defenders. The Speakers of those distracted times must not, perhaps, be blamed too severely for their share in the transactions which now seem so contemptible. They were the products of a day when independence of work or thought was a heinous crime, and the noblest were either sycophants or fanatics.

The Elizabethan Speakers were too deeply imbued with the old bad traditions to do much to elevate the office. In the main they were quite undistinguished, and have left behind them little but their names and a monotonous succession of truckling speeches in praise of Royalty or in insincere depreciation of themselves. One Speaker who, however, must not be passed over without special mention is Richard Onslow—the bearer of a name subsequently to become famous in the history of the Chair. It is curious that this individual was elected against his will—or perhaps it would be more correct to say that he was appointed in defiance of his expressed wish to be passed over. The question of his selection was settled by a division, the first, it is believed, in the history of the Speakership. Eighty-two votes were cast in favour of overriding his refusal, and seventy against. The diffidence shown by Onslow

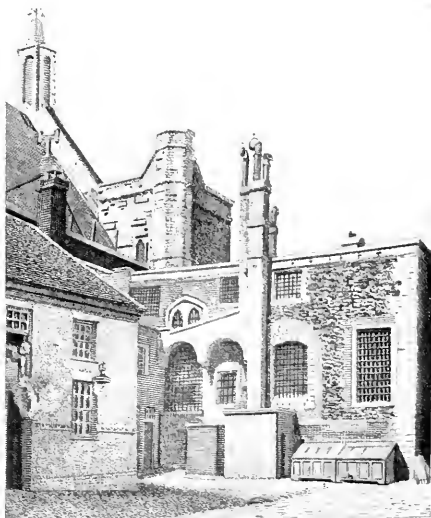
in 1510 to lend its sanction to the despotic decrees of Henry VIII. During the session about seventy Acts received the Royal assent, some of them of a character which has left a deep stain upon the legislative annals. A few examples may be cited. Besides a statute providing for the divorce of the King from his two wives, there were Acts decreeing the burning at the stake of any one who should presume to think or obstinately affirm that the Communion of the Blessed Sacrament in both kinds is necessary for the health of man's soul, or that private masses were not laudable, or that auricular confession was not expedient and necessary. Monstrous as these enactments were, we find that at the close of the session the Speaker, in the most nauseous strain of sycophancy, "congratulated the kingdom, and thought great praises were due to God for the blessing of such a ruler." The times must, indeed, have been out of joint when such things could happen; and unfortunately they were not, as far as the Speakership is concerned, to change. When "the English Bluebeard" disappeared from the scene, and, after a brief interval of light,



PROCESSION OF THE LORDS AND COMMONS FROM WESTMINSTER TO ST. PAUL'S.  
The two litters with adrian jacquary attended st. Paul's carried in 1713, in the reign of Queen Mary, to order judges for the return of England to the Roman Catholic Faith.

was to a great extent justified, for his tenure of office was by no means remarkable for the ability displayed in the conduct of the proceedings. The Speaker's name is chiefly associated with an adulatory speech delivered at the period of the dissolution of the Parliament. Elizabeth was so well satisfied with this that she deigned to supplement the Lord Keeper's customary harangue with a speech of her own "as a periphrasis," for though she had "not been used nor loved to speak in open assemblies," yet she on this occasion broke the rule of silence, "remembering that commonly Princes' own words be better printed in the hearer's memory than those spoken by their command."

Richard Onslow was succeeded by a number of very worthy men who made admirable courtiers, but were not eminent in any other character. One who may be singled out for mention for personal reasons is Sir John Popham, who was Speaker in 1581, the twenty-third year of Elizabeth's reign. This worthy had climbed to the Chair under romantic circumstances. When quite young he was kidnapped from his parents by a band of gypsies, and by them held for some years, when circumstances led to his restoration to his home. In consequence, it is supposed by his biographers, of his vagabond life, he was as a young man noted for his reckless and dissipated habits. Ultimately, through the influence of his wife, he reformed, studied for the law, became a member of Parliament in 1572, and, as already noted, was elected Speaker in 1581. Another occupant of the Chair of the Elizabethan period who should be particularised is Sir John Puckering, who was installed in November, 1585. It fell to the lot of this Speaker to take a prominent part in the proceedings which led to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. Selected to present to Elizabeth the petition of Parliament that the unfortunate Queen should be consigned to the scaffold, Puckering discharged his mission by making a speech conceived in an implacable spirit. Elizabeth, with a sincerity which may reasonably be doubted, manifested a reluctance to accept the advice tendered, and requested that there should be found "a more pleasing expedient whereby both the Queen of Scots' life may be spared and my security provided for." The Commons declined to alter their decision, whereupon Elizabeth replied in a speech which was a masterpiece of jesuitical refinement. "If," she observed, "I shall say unto you I mean not to grant your petition, by my faith I should say unto you more than, perhaps, I mean. And if I said unto you I mean to grant your petition, I should then tell you more than is fit for you to know. And thus I must deliver you an answer answerless." Parliament, with a shrewd appreciation of the Queen's real sentiments, declined to be put off in this way, and persisted in asking for the carrying out of the sentence, urging that "as it were unjust to deny execution of the law to any one of her subjects that should demand it, so much more were it so to the whole body of her people of England unanimously and with one voice humbly and instantly suing for the same." Elizabeth's scruples, genuine or assumed, as is well known, were finally overcome. Mary Queen of Scots died the traitor's death. Partly, perhaps, for his zeal shown in this case, Puckering secured the Lord Chancellorship, and distinguished himself in that office by his devotion to the Protestant cause. A favourite maxim of his was that "he that



THE SPEAKER'S COURTYARD, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.  
Another back view of the Speaker's residence in the old Palace of Westminster.



SIR EDWARD COKE,

Speaker in 1592, one of the ablest men who ever filled the Chair.

is thoroughly Popish cannot but be a trayter."

It fell to Puckering's lot while holding the Great Seal to assist at the installation in the Chair of Sir Edward Coke, one of the most celebrated of the men who have filled the office. The period of Coke's Speakership was, on the whole, the least creditable portion of his career. As we have shown in the preceding chapter, he strengthened if anything the degrading traditions which had grown up about the Chair. Of his ingenuity in hyperbole we have some amusing specimens in the pages of D'Ewes. Thus, in a speech at the close of the session, Coke, addressing the Queen, compared Parliament to "that sweet commonwealth of little bees." Her Majesty was the queen bee, and they lived under the protection of her wings. "Under your happy government we live upon honey; but where the bee sucketh honey there also the spider draweth poison. Some such venoms there be; but such drones and door bees we will expel the hive and serve your Majesty, and withstand any

enemy that shall assault you. Our lands, our goods, our lives, are prostrate at your feet to be commanded." High as is the flight here taken, it did not carry the orator quite so far as the eloquence of Sir Edward Philips, the Speaker of the first Parliament of James I., carried him. It must be read in full to adequately appreciate its supreme qualities; but a few passages may suffice to convey an idea of the spirit of the whole. Commencing his discourse, this worthy said: "Most renowned and of all others most worthy to be admired Sovereign, as the supreme and all-powerful King of Heaven hath created man to govern His works, so did He depute terrestrial beings in whom His image was to govern man, but yet so as still to think that they were but men." Afterwards proceeding to speak of himself, he dwelt with pompous magnificence of diction upon the position he was called upon to fill. "This great and important public service requireth to be managed by the absolute perfection of experience, the mother of prudence; by the profoundness of literature, the father of true judgment; and by the fulness and grace of Nature's gifts, which are the beauty and ornament of arts and actions; from the virtues of all and every whereof I am so far estranged, that not tasting of Parnassus' springs at all, nor of that honey left upon the lips of Plato and Pindarus by the bees, birds of the Muses, I remain untouched with the contrary, and thereby am disabled to undergo the weight of so heavy a burthen, under which I do already groan, and shall both faint and fail if not by your justice disburthened, or by your clemency commiserate." Here, fortunately, we touch the topmost summit—or more properly, perhaps, plumb the very lowest depth—of the rhetorical insincerities which so long marked the utterances of the occupants of the Chair. The fashion gradually went out, and with the introduction of higher ideals of dignity the Speakership gained in strength.

A worthy pioneer of the new school was Sir John Glanville, who is described by Clarendon as a man "very equal to the work, very well acquainted with the proceedings in Parliament, of a quick conception, and of a ready and voluble expression." His personal qualities are

attractively illustrated by an interesting story told of his dealings with his elder brother, Sir Francis Glanville. This individual by his dissipated habits so brought disgrace upon his family that his father cut him off with the proverbial shilling. When the will disinheriting him was read, Sir Francis Glanville was overwhelmed with shame and remorse, and forthwith resolved to lead a better life. Retiring from society, he commenced an honourable and useful career, and in time became quite an altered man. His brother, the Speaker, observing the change, invited the reformed prodigal to a sumptuous banquet, at which many distinguished friends of the family were also guests. When the feast had proceeded some time, a dish was set before Sir Francis Glanville, and he was invited by the host to help himself to the contents. Removing the lid, the knight found a bundle of papers, which on examination proved to be the title-deeds of an important section of the ancestral estates, with a conveyance of the property to himself in due legal form. A veil may be drawn over the scene that followed; but it should be said that this pleasing incident, so eloquent of a generous and high-minded disposition, did much to raise Sir John Glanville in the estimation of his fellows. As a Speaker he showed himself a man of great judgment and discernment. His speeches were eloquent without the insincerity which had long marked the utterances from the Chair; and generally he set an example of dignity which was not lost upon his immediate successors. Though not in any sense a great man, his memory deserves a warm corner in the Parliamentarian's heart as that of one of the most honourable and high-minded members who were ever called to preside over the destinies of the popular chamber.

William Lenthall, who was Glanville's successor, was a Speaker of a very different type. History differs as to the interpretation to be put upon some of his actions, but there is a general agreement amongst writers that he was lacking in fibre and to a certain extent in principle. The one great episode in his career, his vindication of Parliamentary privilege in

the memorable answer he gave to Charles I. when he went to the House of Commons to arrest the five members, was belittled by subsequent acts of indecision and time-serving. Nothing can quite wipe out the stain of the degrading scene which was witnessed in the House of Commons in 1647, when the army and the Parliament having fallen out, a mob of Presbyterian apprentices broke in upon the affrighted assembly and compelled it to pass resolutions rescinding votes already agreed upon. Lenthall's part in the business was little to his credit. Even after he had lent his sanction to the miserable farce and was making his way out through the Lobby, he permitted himself to be dragged back to the Chair by the rioters to put a vote in favour of the King's being brought to London. The distracted state of the country at the time may be held to be some excuse for the weakness shown in the circumstances. Still, something more was expected of a Speaker even under duress than a participation in a heinous infringement of the rights of the House, followed by an undignified scuffle from Palace Yard



*S. Cooper del.*

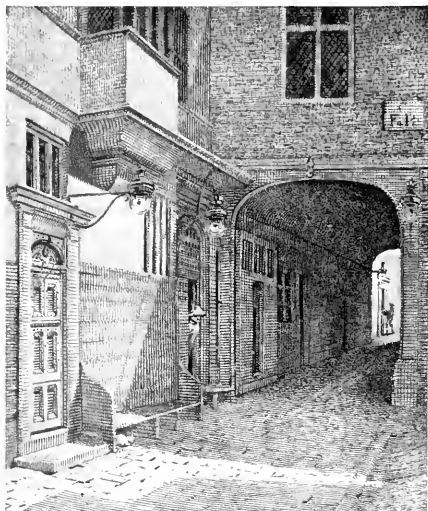
SPEAKER WILLIAM LENTHALL.

A great figure of the Commonwealth period. As Speaker he put the question for the trial of Charles I.



LENTHALL BEING CARRIED BACK TO THE CHAIR BY THE PRESBYTERIANS APPRENTICES.

A degrading episode in Lenthall's career which has brought upon his memory much obloquy.



ENTRANCE FROM NEW PALACE YARD TO THE SPEAKER'S  
COURTYARD IN THE OLD PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

reviewing the troops prior to Monk's arrival, making encouraging speeches to them and despatching them eastwards with instructions to occupy the Tower. Almost simultaneously we find him in the House of Commons violently opposing the bill brought in compelling all members to take an oath abjuring the House of Stuart. Again, he is seen offering an eloquent welcome to Monk on his arrival, and subsequently with him making arrangements for the reinstatement of Parliament on its proper basis. Energetic, however, as he showed himself in bringing about the Restoration, he could not efface the impression of his previous acts of antagonism to the dynasty. He was actually included by the House of Commons in the list of persons exempted from the Act of Indemnity. It might have gone badly with him but for the intervention of the Lords, who modified the penalty by substituting for the major ban a simple decree disabling him from ever again holding public office. For this small mercy he had to be thankful. Even his disgraceful action in giving evidence as to words spoken in the House in the trials of the regicides failed to secure his rehabilitation. He died unhonoured and unlamented in September, 1662. On his dying bed he made a confession of his contrition for his share in the execution of Charles I. "I confess with Saul," he said, "I held their clothes while they murdered him; but herein I was not so criminal as Saul, for I never consented to his death. No excuse can be made for me, that I proposed the bloody question for trying the King; but I hoped even then when I put the question, the very putting the question would have cleared him, because I believed there were four to one against it—Cromwell and his agents deceived me." Lenthall is one of the great names in Parliament, but it is great because of its association with memorable events, and not for the qualities displayed by its owner.

There were several successors to Lenthall before Charles II. came into his own. A singular circumstance is to be noted in reference to those who were appointed just previous to the Restoration. After Cromwell's death, his son Richard, acting on the advice of his Council,

in a strange carriage to escape the further unwelcome attentions of the mob.<sup>1</sup> Nor does his subsequent conduct remove the impression which this episode gives of his character. On another occasion when he wished to avoid an inconvenient attendance at the House, he pleaded a desire to prepare himself for the Sacrament as an excuse for absence. He accepted £6,000 as a gift from Parliament after his speech to the King, and what is far more to his discredit, pocketed a *douceur* of £50 for his good offices in promoting a petition. Furthermore, he received with alacrity from Cromwell one of those singular patents of nobility which the Protector, with a true appreciation of human weakness, distributed amongst his subservient following. Finally, when unmistakable signs told him that the tide had turned against the Commonwealth, he trimmed his sails so as to take the greatest advantage of it. We have in the records of the days which preceded the Restoration an interesting picture of him standing in his gown at the gate of his residence (the Rolls House) in Chancery Lane

<sup>1</sup> Lenthall, describing the incident himself, says that the mob did "justle, pull, and hale the Speaker all the way he went down to his carochie, and force him (to avoid the violence) to betake himself to the next carochie to escape the violence."



resolved to call Parliament together. The Houses assembled on January 27th, 1658, and Mr. Challoner Clute was chosen Speaker. The "heats and tumults" of the House were too much for him. Within a very brief period he became indisposed, and Sir Lilleborne Long was elected in his place. Again the choice was unfortunate, for in a short time the new Speaker sickened and died. Then Mr. Bamfield was appointed *pro tempore*. He had hardly been nominated when Mr. Clute died. The House by this time thought it had had enough of electing Speakers, so it left Mr. Bamfield in undisturbed possession of the Chair.

The period of military ascendancy which accompanied the Restoration was one of degradation for the Chair. A turbulent element was imparted with the colonels who filled the benches, and scenes of disorder were frequent. Burton, in his "Diary," gives some amusing examples of the scant respect shown to the Speaker in those days. The occupant of the Chair was openly flouted and laughed at, and once when, after much provocation, he attempted to assert his authority, he was told that he behaved himself "like a Busby<sup>1</sup> among so many schoolboys, and takes a little too much on him, but grandly." Edward Seymour, who was first elected Speaker in 1673, redeemed the Chair from the humiliating position to which it was brought by the weakness of the earlier Restoration Speakers. Haughty in spirit, with a keen sense of what was due to him as a descendant of the Protector Somerset, he by sheer force of character reduced the factious assembly to order. Reference has already been made to his action on one occasion in quelling a dangerous disturbance while the House was in Committee by resuming the Chair, and compelling excited members to give pledges for their good behaviour. But this, though a conspicuous illustration of the masterfulness of his disposition, is only one of many episodes in which he figured as the autocrat of the popular assembly. Once he ordered an eminent lawyer of the day into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms because he showed no respect as the Speaker's procession passed through Westminster Hall. An even more remarkable assertion of his dignity is to be found in a story which Lord Dartmouth, a contemporary, relates: "On one occasion, in passing through Charing Cross, his (the Speaker's) carriage broke down, and he ordered the beaules to stop the next gentleman's they met and bring it to him. The gentleman in it was much surprised to be turned out of his own coach, but Sir Edward told him it was more proper for him to walk in the streets than the Speaker of the House of Commons, and left him so to do without any further apology."

Pride, however, sometimes has a fall. It had in Seymour's case. One day a petition was put into his hands by a waggish member. Unfolding it and adjusting his spectacles with his accustomed gravity, he began to read: "'The humble petition of Oliver Cromwell—' The devil!" he ejaculated. "The laughter was so loud and long," says the narrator, "that, throwing down the paper, the old man fled from the House in his wrath." It should in justice to Seymour be said that his bearing towards Royalty was quite as haughty as it was towards lesser mortals. On an historic occasion a message being brought from the House of Lords that



SPEAKER FRANCIS ROUX,

An eminent Parliamentarian, who presided over Cromwell's Convention Parliament in 1653.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Busby, the famous headmaster of Westminster School.

the King was on the throne awaiting his presence to hear the prorogation of Parliament, he refused to stir until the Bill of Supply had been brought from the House of Lords according to precedent, and when again warned, he declared that he would be torn by wild horses sooner than quit the Chair. His persistency carried the day. The bill was sent down and the rights of the popular chamber were vindicated. But the incident was not allowed to be overlooked when the time came for Seymour to seek re-election. The King, on being asked to give his sanction to the appointment, flatly refused, and in the end the Commons had to make a fresh choice. At a subsequent period Seymour had to run the gauntlet of an impeachment, one of the counts in the indictment against him being that he had received exorbitant pensions as Speaker. It was a corrupt age, and high-minded, or at least high-stomached, as Seymour was, he was not altogether exempt from the common weakness of desiring to enrich himself through his public position.

For thorough-paced unblushing venality, however, we must refer to the career of Sir John Trevor, who was the first Speaker after the accession of William III. Trevor was, perhaps, as ill favoured physically as any member who ever sat in the Speaker's Chair. Of ungainly figure, and with a lowering countenance which was made more repellent by a villainous squint, he created a most unfavourable impression on all who saw him. The feeling of repulsion was justified. When he had been five years in the Chair whispers went about that he had what the law terms an "illicit gratification" from the City of London in respect of a bill before the House relative to the orphans committed to the care of that body, and had in addition taken a similarly unholy payment from the East India Company for his good offices in respect of some legislation in which they were interested. With a righteous desire to ascertain the truth, the House of Commons appointed a Committee, with Mr. Patrick Foley as chairman, to probe the matter to the bottom. In the result the allegations were proved up to the hilt. There was actually an official entry of Trevor's shame on the corporate records: "That Mr. Chamberlain do pay to the Hon. Sir John Trevor, Knight, Speaker of the House of Commons, the sum of 1,000 guineas, so soon as a bill be passed into an Act of Parliament for satisfying the debts of the orphans and other creditors of the said City." An endorsement on the back of the order set forth that "the within-mentioned 1,000 guineas were delivered and paid unto the Hon. Sir John Trevor this 22nd June, 1694, in the presence of Sir Robert Clayton and Sir James Houlton, which at 22s. exchange comes to £1,100." The bribe from the East India Company was equally well authenticated. Thus there was no alternative but for the House to proceed to vindicate its honour. A resolution to the following effect was drafted: "That Sir John Trevor, Speaker of this House, receiving a gratuity of 1,000 guineas from the City of London, after passing of the Orphans Bill, is guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour." Extraordinary though it may seem



BUST OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

The gift of Mr. Wertheimer. A fine effigy of the Protector, reputed to be the work of Bernini.

to our modern way of looking at things, it devolved upon Sir John Trevor himself to put this denunciation of his guilty conduct to the House. Shame would have overwhelmed a less sensitive man, but Trevor was not constituted that way, though it was with blanched cheek and quivering lip that he put the fatal question. There was a roar of "Ayes," and almost complete silence when the "Noes" were called. Slipping out of his seat, Trevor made for his home, there to hide his face from the public gaze. When the next day came round, and the House awaited with eager expectancy his advent, a note was put into the hands of the Clerk. It was to the following effect:—

"GENTLEMEN,—

"I did intend to have waited on you this morning; but, after I was up, I was taken suddenly ill with a violent cholick. I hope to be in a condition of attending you to-morrow morning. In the meantime, I desire you will be pleased to excuse my attendance.

"I am, with all duty, gentlemen,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"J. TREVOR, *Speaker*"

Anxious to avoid even the appearance of hasty action, the House adjourned until the next day. Then another letter was forthcoming from Trevor intimating that his illness still prevented his attendance. Upon receipt of this, the House decided to act in the only possible way by expelling Trevor from the office he had dishonoured, and electing in his place a new Speaker. The King put no obstacles in the way of the vindication of the House's good name; but he showed a little too much anxiety to secure the election of Sir Thomas Littleton, a worthy country gentleman, to suit the independent spirit of the times. When the Comptroller of the Household rose in his place and expressed his desire to "nominate" Sir Thomas Littleton, members flared up, and the opinion was plainly expressed "that it was contrary to the undoubted right of the House of choosing their own speaker, to have any person who brought a message from the King to nominate one to them." To place the matter beyond dispute, Mr. Paul Foley was put up in opposition, and on a division the Court nominee was rejected by 179 votes to 146. Thereafter Mr. Foley was elected to the Chair unanimously, the choice of the House being subsequently ratified by Lord Keeper Somers on behalf of the King. The Speaker distinguished himself during his term of office by his vigorous intervention



*From the painting by Sir Peter Lely in the National Portrait Gallery.*

GEORGE MONK, DUKE OF ALBEMARLE,

Whose historic declaration for a Free Parliament led directly to the Restoration.

in the debates in opposition to the measures of the King, particularly those relative to the army. This action, so opposed to all modern notions of the duties of the Chair, appears to have commended him to the House rather than not, for when a new Parliament was summoned in 1695 he was re-elected without challenge, and continued to serve until 1698, when his old rival, Sir Thomas Littleton, was appointed.

Trevor, meanwhile, though disgraced, was far from being ruined. He actually had the effrontery to contemplate re-entering Parliament at the general election of 1695, and was only prevented from submitting himself to the electors by the express commands of the King, who gave as a reason for the prohibition that his re-admission might lead to "inconvenience," through the revival of the old scandal. William III. was not particularly shocked at the corruption of the ex-Speaker. The man's crime in his eyes was that he had been found out. In thus regarding the incident, he only reflected the popular sentiment of that lax time, which turned the whole scandal into a jest, and, in allusion to Trevor's physical defect, spoke of



VIEW OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS AND SPEAKER'S HOUSE.

The meanness of the old buildings compared with the magnificence of the present Houses of Parliament will be noted.

Justice being blind, while Bribery only squinted. That the feeling of indignation could not have been very deep is conclusively proved by the fact that Trevor was permitted to retain his judicial office of Master of the Rolls, and by the further circumstance that he was one of the eight Condemners elected to the first Privy Council. It has been left to posterity to pronounce upon him the sweeping condemnation of being the most disgraceful figure who ever occupied the Speaker's Chair.

It is pleasant to turn from the degrading associations of this late seventeenth-century period to the era which followed, in which the honoured name of Onslow conferred lustre on the splendid office with which we are dealing. First to be noted, though second of the famous line of Speakers, is Sir Richard Onslow, who was voted to the Chair in 1708. A hot-tempered, somewhat vain, man, known to his intimates as "stiff Dick," he showed himself during his Speakership a great stickler for forms. One story, illustrative of this side of his character, is told by Sir Arthur Onslow, his eminent relative and successor in office. According to this authority, "When Sir Richard Onslow went up with the House to demand judgment against

Dr. Sacheverell, as the Mace was going into the House of Lords before the Speaker, the Black Rod endeavoured to hinder it by putting his black rod across the door; on which the Speaker said: 'If he did not immediately take away the black rod, he would return to the House of Commons.' The Black Rod asked him to stay a little and he would acquaint the Lords. The door was shut down, and Mr. Speaker and the House stood without. After a little time the door was opened, and Mr. Speaker with the Mace went in. As Mr. Speaker was going to the Bar, the Black Rod attempted to interpose himself between the Speaker and the Mace, upon which the Speaker said aloud: 'My Lords, if you do not immediately order your Black Rod to go away, I will immediately return to the House of Commons.' Then Lord Chancellor Cowper directed the Black Rod to go from thence. Then Mr. Speaker with the Mace went up to the Bar. The Black Rod was then ordered to bring the prisoner, and the Black Rod was going to put him on the right hand of Mr. Speaker, who upon that said: 'If you do not order the Black Rod to go with the prisoner on the left hand of me at some distance, I will return to the House of Commons.' Upon which the Lord Chancellor directed the Black Rod so to do; and then Mr. Speaker demanded the judgment, and the Lord Chancellor accordingly pronounced sentence upon the prisoner kneeling at the Bar." "Stiff Dick's" sense of his dignity, though perhaps excessive, was not without its value in securing respect for the Chair. Markedly during his period of office there was a strengthening of the position of the Speaker in the House and a growth in the prestige of the office outside.

But it was during the long term of office, lasting over thirty-three years and extending through five Parliaments, of his distinguished nephew, previously referred to, that the Speakership attained to its highest point of eminence. Sir Arthur Onslow became Speaker in 1827, five years after his entrance to the House as member for Guildford. He was a man of vigorous understanding, imbued with liberal ideas, and zealous in the discharge of his public duties. In the Chair he soon acquired a reputation for firmness, tempered by sound judgment. His decisions were rarely challenged, and on questions even outside his Parliamentary duties his views carried great weight. Throughout the thirty-three years he presided over the deliberations of the popular chamber he exercised almost despotic sway. Yet such was the respect he secured by his impartiality and firmness that his re-election on each of the five occasions he was presented for the Royal approbation was carried with enthusiasm. In common with his kinsman, Sir Richard Onslow, he was extremely punctilious. The respect due to the Chair was exacted with unswerving firmness on all occasions, and he was quick to resent any disregard of its decrees. "Naming a member" in his period of office was a punishment which carried with it a subtle terror for the Parliamentary evil-doer. Invariably the process served to bring the delinquent to a sense of his criminality. A familiar story, current in Parliamentary literature, asserts that Onslow, once asked what the consequences of disregarding a "naming" would be, replied: "The Lord in heaven only knows"; but there is reason to think that this is a legend put about by some of



SIR EDWARD SEYMOUR.

An eminent Speaker noted for his haughty assertion of the dignity of the Chair



SPEAKER CHARLES WOLFRAN CORNWALL,

Who occupied the Chair from 1750 to 1789. He is immortalised in the *Holland*.

of what was due to it from himself as well as others, for he thereby fixed a standard of rectitude and personal sacrifice which has ever since been associated with the occupancy of the Chair. How, apart from the impertinent triflers of the House, his splendid services to the cause of constitutional government were regarded is eloquently shown by the honours lavished upon him when, in 1761, failing health compelled him to resign the post he had so long filled. The Corporation of the City of London presented him with its freedom "as a grateful and lasting testimony of the respectful love and veneration" which the citizens entertained "of the unwearied and disinterested labours he bestowed, and the impartial and judicious conduct he maintained in the execution of his important office." More substantial recognition of the Speaker's services came from the King, who, at the direct request of the Commons, granted an annuity of £3,000 for the lives of himself and his son George. These grants were subsequently settled by an Act of Parliament which was to supply a precedent for a permanent system by which the services of Speakers on relinquishing office were rewarded by a grateful country. Sir Arthur Onslow's reputation as an interpreter of the rules of the House survived long after he disappeared from St. Stephen's Chapel. A humorous proof of this is supplied by an incident which is related of a debate a good many years after his resignation. Burke was inveighing with his customary ardour against a motion to prevent the publication of the proceedings of the House, when he was brought up by a son of Sir Arthur Onslow, who challenged his views, and recalled his family connection with three Speakers as a circumstance which entitled his own arguments to weight. Burke was quite equal to the occasion. "I have not," he said with crushing scorn, "the advantage of a Parliamentary genealogy. I was not born, like the honourable gentleman, with 'Order' running through my veins. But as that gentleman boasts of his father, his son will never boast of him. The Parliamentary line is cut off."

The spirit of sturdy independence which Onslow assiduously cultivated during his tenure of office was worthily sustained by his immediate successors, Sir John Cust and Sir Fletcher Norton; the latter, indeed, if anything, improved upon the Onslow traditions. He was particularly resolute in his attitude towards the House of Lords. Once when there was a disturbance amongst the members he called to the offenders "with all the softness of a bassoon, 'Pray, gentlemen, be orderly; you are almost as bad as the other House,'" a pointed allusion to a riotous scene which had occurred a short time previously in connection with a violent

his critics in ridicule of his overpowering displays of dignity. Horace Walpole tells a story in a letter to Sir Horace Mann in 1758 which shows that at least there was a strong disposition to extract fun from the little weaknesses of the Speaker. A debate was proceeding in Committee in reference to some new taxes. "Lord Strange said: 'I will bring him down from the gallery,' and proposed that the Speaker should be exempt from the place tax. He came down and besought not to be exempted. Lord Strange persisted; so did the Speaker. After the debate, Lord Strange, going out, said: 'Well, did I not show my dromedary well?' I should tell you that one of the fashionable sights of the winter has been a dromedary and camel, the proprietor of which has entertained the town with a droll variety of advertisements."

Sir Arthur Onslow may well be pardoned for taking an exalted view of his position, and

dispute then proceeding between the two Houses as to the right of the Commons to be present in the Peers' chamber during a debate. At another time—in 1772—Burke having complained with much indignation of a detention of three hours' duration at the door of the House of Lords with a bill sent up from the House of Commons, and the House having in revenge promptly rejected a bill sent down from the House of Lords, Norton tossed the measure across the table on to the floor, and, with his tacit sanction, the document was literally kicked out of the Legislative Chamber by an irate body of members. But the most striking example of his lofty spirit is supplied by Horace Walpole. The occasion was the presentation to the King in April, 1777, of a bill providing for the payment of his Majesty's debts and augmenting the Royal revenue by £100,000 a year. In handling the measure Norton made a speech informing the King that his faithful Commons "had, in a time of public distress, full of difficulty and danger, and labouring under burdens almost too heavy to be borne, granted him a supply and great additional revenue, great beyond example, great beyond his Majesty's highest expense (he really used the word 'wants,' but in his printed speech changed it to 'expense'), but hoping that what they had contributed so liberally would be employed wisely." The speech gave great umbrage to the King, and a few days later, probably at his instigation, reference was made to it by a member (Rigby), who took the Speaker severely to task for his remarks. Norton, in his turn, was greatly incensed at the attack. He felt that his dignity was outraged by a censure emanating from such a quarter, and would probably have resigned had not Rigby, at the earnest solicitation of Lord North, apologised, and the House passed a resolution justifying him in the course he had adopted.

Though Norton was, as these incidents show, a strong Speaker, he was not a discreet one. He is exhibited in a conspicuously unfavourable light by Walpole in a debate which took place in Committee on March 13th, 1780, on a question bearing upon the revenue of the Crown. Invited by Charles Fox to give his opinion on the doctrine of the inalienable character of the King's revenue expounded by his old antagonist Rigby, the Speaker, who was in the gallery at the time, came down and "made a warm and good speech against the increased influence of the Crown." Not content with this, "he broke out into the most extravagant and profligate rhapsody that perhaps was ever heard in that place, accusing Lord North of duplicity, and expressing himself his personal enemy on the grounds of a story he had the impudence and absurdity to tell with as little modesty in the high estimation at which he rated himself. He acquainted the House that the Duke of Grafton, when Minister, had offered him the posts of Chief Justice in Eyre and the Speakership, with a promise of the best place in the law that should become vacant, without which, as he thought himself at the head of his profession, he would not quit his business. He asserted that Lord North had been privy to this bargain, and yet had broken it by offering a large pecuniary bribe to Lord Chief Justice de Grey to quit that post in favour of Wedderburn." Lord North denied Norton's version of the transaction, and in the end "the dialogue degener-



*From an engraving after the picture by Sir Henry Robinson, R.A.*

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY DUNDAS, VISCOUNT MELVILLE,  
In regard to whose impeachment a memorable casting vote was given by  
Speaker Abbot.

ated into Billingsgate." On a subsequent day, stung by the severe criticisms passed upon him by the Press, Norton offered a qualified apology to the House for his indecent behaviour. It was generally felt, however, that the outbreak was unpardonable in a Speaker, and when, a few months later, Norton came up for re-election, Mr. Charles Wolfran Cornwall was put up in opposition to him, and, on a division, elected by 203 votes to 176. Sir Fletcher Norton was subsequently elevated to the peerage as Baron Grantley.

The new Speaker was not a man of particular note as a politician, and his tenure of the Chair was in harmony with his earlier career. His chief claim to distinction is that he figures in the *Rolliad* in these lines:—

There Cornwall sits, and, oh! unhappy fate,  
Must sit for ever through the long debate,  
Painful pre-eminence! He hears, 'tis true,  
Fox, North, and Burke—but hears Sir Joseph<sup>1</sup> too.

Following Mr. Cornwall came two Speakers, William Wyndham Grenville and Henry Addington, both of whom were destined after quitting office to attain to the highest position in the Ministry of the day.<sup>2</sup> Grenville's occupancy of the Chair was for a very brief period, and he has left only a slight mark on the annals of the Speakership. Addington, on the other hand, served during twelve busy, eventful years, his connection only being severed by his elevation to the Premiership. He made a most capable Speaker. He was tactful and conciliatory, and was endowed with the requisite firmness for dealing with the rather combustible elements that went to make up the House of Commons at the end of the eighteenth century. The weakest and, for his own reputation, most foolish of his acts was to accept the King's invitation to form an Administration on Pitt's resignation over the Catholic question in 1801. Nature had not marked him out for a statesman. At the highest he was but a respectable mediocrity with a talent for public business and sound judgment of men. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, his failure as a First Minister was complete. In fact, it may be said of him that while he was one of the best of Speakers, he was one of the worst of Premiers.



WATER-GATE, NEW PALACE YARD, AS SEEN FROM THE RIVER.

Emerging into the nineteenth century, we reach what we may describe as the line of modern Speakers. First of this distinguished band was Sir John Freeman-Mitford, who presided over the first House of Commons which assembled after the Union with Ireland. He occupied the Chair only a year, and though the year was one of great political excitement, he did not display any special talent in the direction of the affairs of the House. History takes account of him chiefly because he was the first to be directly enrolled for services as Speaker. He took his seat in the House of Lords as Lord Redesdale. His successor as Speaker was Mr. Charles Abbot, afterwards Lord Colchester, who was elected in 1802 and held office for fifteen years. It is always difficult away from the period in which a Speaker lived to decide precisely upon the position he is entitled to occupy, as his reputation is built up, not so much upon what he does or says, as upon what he does not

<sup>1</sup> Sir Joseph Mawbey, a well-known bore of the period.

<sup>2</sup> Four Speakers of the House of Commons have afterwards occupied the position of Premier—viz., Robert Harley, elected Speaker in 1700; Spencer Compton, who, as Earl of Wilmington, was First Lord of the Treasury in 1742-3; William Wyndham Grenville, afterwards Lord Grenville, who was the head of "the Ministry of all the Talents" in 1806-7; and Henry Addington, afterwards Lord Sidmouth, who was Prime Minister from 1801 to 1804.





*From an engraving after the picture by John Hoppner, R.A.*

WILLIAM WYNDHAM, FIRST BARON GRENVILLE,

Speaker for a few months in 1789

say and what he refrains from doing. In other words, the most successful occupants of the Chair are those who have to obtrude their individuality least on the House. Speaker Abbot, estimated by whatever standard may be set up, is undeniably entitled to a position in the front rank of those who have presided over the House of Commons. His rule was autocratic; but there was a good thick fold of velvet over the iron hand. If at times members were made to feel that his decisions were arbitrary, they also had to admit that they were enforced with all courtesy. In the popular mind his Speakership will ever be associated with the episode connected with the passing of the resolution for Lord Melville's impeachment. Amongst the many historic scenes which took place within the walls of St. Stephen's Chapel this was perhaps the most genuinely dramatic. It may certainly be safely asserted that nothing more moving ever passed there.

A few sentences of explanation are necessary to bring home to readers the full interest of the drama that was enacted in the House of Commons on that eventful day in April, 1805. Charges of corruption had been levelled against Henry Dundas, Lord Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty, in connection with his earlier official career as Treasurer of the Navy. The accusation was that he had withdrawn large sums of public money from the Bank of England, placed them with a private bank, and reaped a rich but ignoble harvest in the accruing interest. Testimony was forthcoming of a damning kind, proving beyond question that the public funds had been utilised in the way described, and the only question was as to Lord Melville's personal responsibility. Public opinion, ever prone to think the worst, went strongly against him. It was argued that the large transactions which had passed could not possibly have been put through without the Minister's guilty acquiescence. In this position of affairs the matter was brought forward in the House of Commons in the form of a motion for Melville's impeachment.

Pitt ably and energetically defended his colleague and friend from the aspersions cast upon him, and other leading members eloquently espoused his cause. But the feeling against him in the House was very strong. On a division being taken it was found that there were 216 members for the impeachment and exactly the same number against. Then followed that remarkable incident to which allusion has been made. Upon the Speaker's casting vote depended the issue. How would he give it? A thrill went through the House as members silently awaited the decision. "Yet it was long," says one who was present,<sup>1</sup> "before the Speaker gave his vote; agitation overcame him; his face grew white as a sheet. Terrible as was the distress to all who awaited the decision from the Chair, terrible as was the Speaker's distress, this moment of suspense lasted ten long minutes. There the Speaker sat in silence; all were silent. At length his voice was heard; he gave his vote, and he condemned Lord Melville." The effect of the decision on Pitt was striking. "At the sound of the Speaker's voice the Prime Minister crushed his hat over his brows to hide the tears that poured over his cheeks. He pushed in haste out of the House. Some of his opponents, I am ashamed to say, thrust themselves near 'to see how Billy looked.' His friends gathered in defence around and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mark Boyd.



WILLIAM WYNDHAM, LORD GRENVILLE.

Another portrait of the Speaker of 1789.

screened him from rude glances." The Great Commoner, it is believed, never completely recovered from the blow. So intimate had he been with Melville, and so conscious was he of his rectitude, that he felt the reflection upon his honour as he might if it had been upon his own. Within a few months of the occurrence of this incident Pitt was carried to his last resting-place in the Abbey.

In consonance with the vote of the House of Commons, Melville was on April 29th, 1806, brought to trial before his peers, his case furnishing the last instance of an impeachment which the records of the country supply. The impugned Minister made a gallant defence, averring that the transactions with which he was charged were carried through without his knowledge or consent. After a patient investigation he was acquitted of all personal corruption, and with that verdict, pronounced by the great majority of his peers, the public acquiesced. Even Wilberforce, who took a leading part in bringing about the trial, was satisfied with the result, as is clear from his diary, where he records with evident satisfaction having by chance met Melville and shaken him cordially by the hand—an experience, he says, which he would not have parted with for a thousand pounds.

Mr. Abbot's Speakership continued uninterruptedly until 1817, when he resigned through failing health and was elevated to the peerage with the title of Lord Colchester. His successor was Sir Charles Manners Sutton, who sat in the Chair during five successive Parliaments, his entire period of service lasting eighteen years. A pleasant picture of this Speaker is supplied by Mr. Grant in his "Random Recollections of the House of Commons." "A man of more conciliating, bland, and gentlemanly manners," says this writer, "never crossed the threshold of St. Stephen's. . . . He never suffered his political prejudices, strong as they were, to interfere with the amenities of gentlemanly intercourse. The perfect gentleman was visible in everything he said and did; nay, it was visible in his very person, whether you saw him walking in the streets or filling the Chair in the House of Commons. There was a mildness and good nature in his features which could not fail to strike the stranger the moment he saw him, and which was certain of prepossessing every one in his favour. With these softer and more amiable features there were blended a dignity and energy of character which invariably secured the respect of members. . . . His voice was, without exception, the most sonorous, powerful, and melodious I ever heard; its compass surprising when he called out, as he too often had occasion to do, 'Order, order!' The sounds, even when he manifestly gave no play to his lungs, but spoke with as little effort as if he had been speaking in a whisper, fell on your ear—it mattered not in what part of the House you were at the time—with a loudness and depth of intonation which at once startled and delighted you. If very great noise and confusion prevailed in the House at the time, and he consequently uttered the words 'Order, order!' with some energy, you would have supposed you heard the voice of a Bonaparte."

Once, and once only, Sir Charles Sutton availed himself of the privilege of speaking in Committee. The subject under debate was a question affecting the privileges of the University of Cambridge, of which he was member. His speech lasted about ten or fifteen minutes. "It did not," says Mr. Grant, "indicate a vigorous or comprehensive mind, but it was, in the delivery, as fine a specimen of elocution as one could wish to hear." Though, as Mr. Grant notes, Sir Charles Manners Sutton was widely popular and had a reputation for impartiality, it was sometimes thought by the Liberals that he did not exercise his powers with absolute fairness. His critics averred that when several members rose to reply to a Tory





*By permission of Messrs. Debenham & Unwin, No. 10, Bond Street.*

THE RIGHT HONBLE. WILLIAM COURT GULLY, K.C.  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

He was first appointed to the Chair, after a contest, on the 19th April 1895. He was re-elected without opposition on the meeting of every subsequent Parliament.

speech of ability, he took care to fix his eye on the least talented of the members; and conversely, that when a number of Tories got up to answer a Liberal speech, he invariably took particular pains to ensure that the ablest of the group should address the House. The feeling of discontent culminated in a vigorous attack upon his position when a new Parliament met on February 19th, 1835. The Whigs then put up in opposition to him James Abercromby, a respected member who sat for Edinburgh. On a division this gentleman was elected by 316 to 310 votes. As a consequence of the vote, Sir Charles Manners Sutton retired to the House of Lords with the title of Viscount Canterbury and the customary pension. The victory was dearly gained, for Mr. Abercromby proved but an indifferent Speaker. Though personally an estimable man, he lacked the force of character essential to an effective control of the House. His health, moreover, was too delicate to withstand the severe physical strain which the Speakership imposes upon those who discharge its duties. His retirement in May, 1839, with the title of Lord Dunfermline, was, therefore, hailed with something like satisfaction even by those who had placed him in the Chair.

The filling of the vacancy led to another trial of party strength. On behalf of the Whigs Mr. Charles Shaw Lefevre was proposed, and the Tories nominated Mr. Henry Goulburn. The division showed that the opinion of the House was very much what it had been at the previous contest. For Mr. Shaw Lefevre 317 votes were given, as against 299 cast for his opponent. Events entirely justified the choice made by the House. In a career which extended over eighteen years, Mr. Shaw Lefevre revealed the highest qualities as a Speaker. His knowledge of Parliamentary procedure was deep and thorough, and his rulings were as invariably sound and logical as they were impartial. When in 1841 Sir Robert Peel came into power with a big Conservative majority at his back, there was a desire amongst some of the more extreme of his followers to elect a Speaker of their own political complexion. But the Tory Premier set his face determinedly against this idea. As soon as Mr. Shaw Lefevre had been proposed for re-election, he rose and seconded the motion in a speech of considerable interest. His contention was that the person elected to the Chair who had conscientiously and ably performed his duties should not, on a change of Government, be displaced because his political opinions were antagonistic to those of the majority. The view set forth was in harmony with the bulk of the precedents furnished since 1727, when Arthur Onslow was elected to the Chair, and the House ratified it by a unanimous vote. Thereafter Mr. Shaw Lefevre remained in undisturbed possession of his office until 1857, when he retired to enjoy in the House of Lords, with the title of Viscount Eversley, the well-earned fruits of a laborious career.

His successor was Mr. John Evelyn Denison, who, elected in 1857, continued in office until 1872. He suffered somewhat by comparison with his brilliant predecessor, but his Speakership, if not particularly distinguished, witnessed no diminution in either the efficiency or dignity of the office. He was, however, not at all punctilious in his management



CHARLES MANNERS SUTTON, VISCOUNT CANTEBURY,  
Speaker from 1817 to 1839.

of the House. Palmerston, in one of his nightly reports addressed from the Treasury Bench to the late Queen Victoria, mentions an incident which clearly brings this out. It happened towards the end of the session of 1860, when everybody was anxious to get away. "Members," he wrote, "are leaving town, but the tiresome ones, who have no occupation of their own and no chance of seeing their names in the newspapers when Parliament is up, remain to obstruct and delay by talking. The Speaker, who has not been quite well, grows as impatient as any official who has hired a grouching moor and cannot get to it; and a few nights ago, when a tiresome orator got up to speak just as an end to the debate had been expected, the Speaker cried 'Oh! oh!' in chorus with the rest of the House."

Mr. Denison (hereafter to be known as Viscount Ossington) retired amid general good wishes in 1872, giving place to Mr. Henry Bouverie Brand. It was this gentleman's lot to officiate during one of the most stirring and stormy periods of Parliamentary history. The organisation of the Nationalist Irish party under the leadership of Mr. Parnell and the simultaneous development of the system of persistent obstruction of debates as a weapon of partisan warfare, gave a vigour and liveliness to the proceedings which had never before been surpassed, and only equalled, perhaps, in the Cromwellian period, when the Independent and Presbyterian factions were fighting for ascendancy. It is impossible to go in any detail into the actions of the Speaker in these troubled days without trenching upon matters which lie altogether beyond the province of a work such as this; and there is the less necessity for any such review as the facts are still fresh in the public memory. One episode only calls for particular notice. This was the historic debate of January, 1881, on the motion to introduce the Protection of Person and Property in Ireland Bill. Introduced at four o'clock on Monday, January 31st, the motion was debated continuously by the Nationalist members throughout

that day and the whole of the next, and Wednesday morning still found the House engaged upon the question. Everything seemed to portend another day's debate at least, when at nine o'clock Mr. Gladstone, the Premier, entered the House, accompanied by the leaders of the Opposition. Simultaneously the Speaker resumed the Chair, and, reading from a paper, set forth the reasons which in his opinion rendered it necessary to put an end to the debate, though no power under the rules existed to do so. A crisis, he said, had arisen which demanded the prompt interposition of the Chair and the House. "The usual rules have been proved powerless to ensure orderly and effective debate. An important measure recommended in her Majesty's gracious speech nearly a month since, and declared to be urgent in the interests of



Engraving by J. G. Thompson, R.A.

CHARLES SHAW LEFEVRE, VISCOUNT EVERSLEY.

Speaker from 1859 to 1877. Justly considered one of the greatest of the line of Speakers.

the State by a decisive majority, is being arrested by the action of an inconsiderable minority, the members of which have resorted to these modes of obstruction, which have been recognised by the House as a Parliamentary offence. The dignity, the credit, and the authority of the House are seriously threatened, and it is necessary that they should be vindicated. . . . A new and exceptional course is imperatively demanded, and I am satisfied I shall best carry out the will of the House and may rely on its support if I decline to call upon any more members to speak, and at once proceed to put the several questions to the House. I feel assured that the House will be prepared to exercise all its powers in giving effect to these proceedings." Cheers, answered by defiant cries from the Nationalist benches, punctuated the reading of the document, the significance of which was at once seen. Thereafter, the House divided on the several motions before it, and finally adjourned after an unprecedented sitting of forty-one and a half hours. Mr. Speaker Brand's action on this occasion was subsequently hotly challenged by the Nationalists, but the general sense of the House and of the country heartily approved of



*By permission of "Vanity Fair."*

JOHN EVELYN DENISON, VISCOUNT OSSINGTON,

Speaker from 1857 to 1872.

the step taken, and, in view of the issues involved, history will probably acquiesce in the verdict on the principle that a desperate remedy may be legitimately employed in the relief of a desperate disease. Out of this memorable incident originated the rules for the closure of debate which are now an important and valued part of the system of Parliamentary procedure. If he had no other title to fame, Mr. Speaker Brand's reputation would be established by his firm and judicious conduct throughout these exciting times. But his claim to posthumous recognition goes far beyond that, consisting, as it does, of a uniform discharge with high distinction of the responsible duties of the Chair.

In Mr. (now Lord) Peel, whose elevation to the Chair followed the resignation of Mr. Brand and his removal to the Upper House with the title of Viscount Hampden in 1884, a successor was found entirely worthy to wear the dropped mantle. Bearing the name of one of the greatest of modern British statesmen, richly endowed with the intellectual and physical qualities which are most esteemed in a Speaker, and imbued in a strong degree with the traditions of Parliamentary life, he leapt at once into a position of commanding authority and influence. His firm, strong hand was felt immediately in the direction of the proceedings. Infractions of the recognised rules met with stern and instant punishment. He steadily yet courteously set his face against the smallest departure from the etiquette of the House, which long centuries of usage had sanctioned and sanctified. In time even the most irresponsible members were held under the spell of his striking personality, and would shrink into nothingness



*Engraving from the *Anglo-Saxon*.*

JOHN EVELYN DENISON (AFTERWARDS VISCOUNT OSSINGTON).

storm and brought the House to a sense of the shame which the earlier incidents reflected upon it. It was a triumph of the strong mind—a notable testimony to the influence of character. When the circumstances which gave rise to the episode are forgotten, Mr. Peel's action will be treasured amongst the most splendid of the traditions which cluster about the Chair. It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that the great reputation which this eminent Speaker secured was solely due to his masterly nature. The pink of courtesy, he always in his relations with members maintained the pleasantest relations. No legitimate appeal was ever made to him in vain from whatever quarter of the House it might come. He regarded himself as in a real and personal sense the head of the legislative family, and whether dispensing princely hospitality in the Speaker's House or discharging the more practical duties pertaining to his office, he never permitted himself to make invidious distinctions based either on social prejudice or partisan predilections.

His address to the House upon retirement from the Chair was a fit termination to his illustrious career. The scene, not only in the House, but in the Lobby, was a memorable one. Passing through the Lobby for the last time, he was saluted by a crowd of members of both Houses, and distinguished visitors. The appearance of the House, filled to its utmost capacity, betokened an event of unusual importance, and when Speaker Peel rose from his seat he was received with thunderous cheers by the whole House, and his farewell speech was punctuated by loud demonstrations of applause. After referring to the cause of his retirement and the consideration he had received from all sides of the House during his tenure of office, he said: "If at any time I have given offence to any one member, or more members, I hope an Act of Oblivion may be passed. If I have ever deviated from that calm which should ever characterise the utterances of the occupants of the Chair, I have never been consciously actuated by personal or political feeling. I have tried to consult the advantage and permanent interests of this assembly. . . . I have passed through many sessions, I have witnessed many changes"—

at the sound of his awe-inspiring voice, or even at a glance of his penetrating eye. No despotic monarch ever commanded more unquestioning allegiance or more absolute obedience. His wonderful power over the House was perhaps never more impressively revealed than in the disorderly scene of July 27th, 1893, when his mere appearance in the Chair served to still angry passions which had only a few minutes previously vented themselves with almost unexampled violence and disregard of personal dignity. A weak man would have aggravated the situation by injudicious displays of temper or indiscriminate dealing out of censure. Mr. Peel avoided these pitfalls. Calm and dignified, he with a few words allayed the raging



*From a painting by J. H. Hill & Sons.*

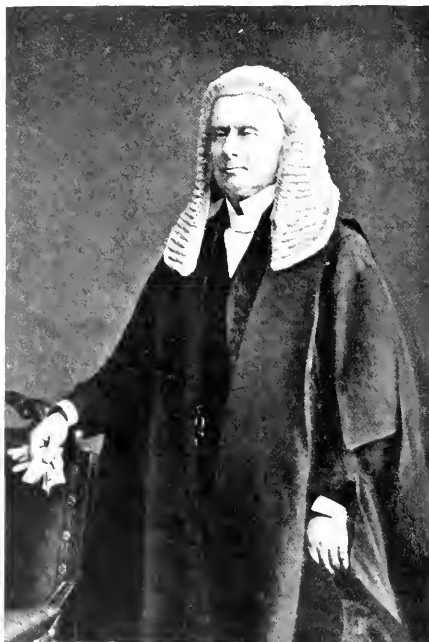
THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR W. PEAR (JOHN PEAR).

Spoke from 1841 to 1896, a highly popular occupant of the Chair. He wielded an extraordinary influence over the House.



referring to the institution of the closure of debate, "Finally," continued Mr. Peel, "let me say a few parting words in conclusion, and I wish to speak, not with the brief remnant of authority which is still left to me with the sands of my official life rapidly running out—I would rather speak as a member of thirty years' experience in this House, who speaks to his brother members and comrades, if I may dare to use the term. I would fain hope that, by the co-operation of all its members, this House may continue to be a pattern and a model to foreign nations, and to those great people who have left our shores and have carried our blood, our race, our language, our institutions, and our habits of thought to the uttermost parts of the earth. I would fain indulge in the belief and the hope—and as I speak with the traditions of this House and its glorious memories crowding on my mind, that hope and that belief become stronger and more emphasised—though with both hope and belief I would couple an earnest but a humble prayer that this House may have centuries of honour, of dignity, of usefulness before it, and that it may continue to hold, not a prominent only, but a first and foremost position among the legislative assemblies of the world." With some emotion Mr. Peel referred to the kindness he had experienced from all sections of the House—"a kindness the expression of which adds perhaps to the poignancy of my feelings and accentuates my regret on leaving the Chair, but the memory of which will after a short time mitigate, I am sure, to me the inevitable pain of parting." The Peel tenure of the Chair will have a place in history with the greatest of Parliamentary memories.

It was with serious misgiving that the House of Commons addressed itself to the task of providing a successor to Mr. Peel when, in 1895, somewhat serious indisposition prompted



*From a photo by Maull & Fox.*

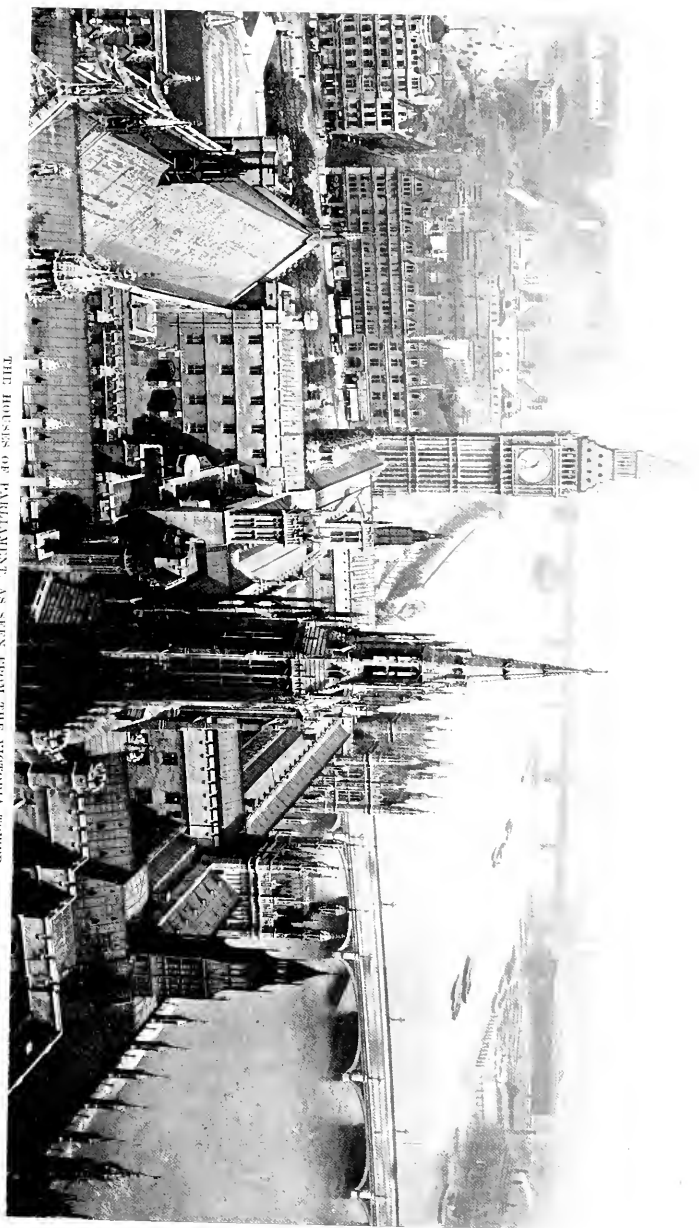
HENRY DOUVERIE BRAND, VISCOUNT HAMPDEN,  
Speaker of the House of Commons from 1872 to 1884



*From a photo by J. Russell & Sons.*

THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT PEEL, FOUR TIMES ELECTED  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

He is the youngest son of the celebrated Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel.



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, AS SEEN FROM THE VICTORIA TOWER.

him to seek his well-earned repose in the House of Lords. A Speaker is always difficult to replace; a successful one can never be adequately replaced—immediately at least. Those who occupy the Chair grow into the position, as it were. As they are necessarily intruded in the duties of the office, they have to establish their influence and their own traditions before the House can be induced to extend to them that unqualified allegiance which is indispensable to the smooth working of the Parliamentary machine. Such was the perplexity which Mr. Peel's retirement caused that each party resolved to put forward a nominee for the office. The Unionists favoured Sir Matthew White Ridley, a highly respected and widely experienced



SPEAKER'S CORRIDOR, HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Affording communication between the Speaker's House and the legislative apartments.

member of their party, who in many responsible positions had shown himself possessed of those special personal qualities which are most desirable in a Speaker. On the Liberal side Mr. William Court Gully was adopted as candidate. This gentleman occupied a position of considerable eminence at the Bar, but he had up to that time not been at all prominent in Parliament. What the House knew of him, however, was all to his advantage, and his fine presence, courtly bearing, and untarnished reputation convinced the Liberals, who were in the ascendency at the time, that in voting for him they were making a suitable choice. The result of the division in the circumstances was a foregone conclusion. For Mr. Gully 285 members voted, as against 274 who supported Sir Matthew White Ridley's candidature. The contest left a little soreness in the minds of the Unionist party, who had regarded Sir Matthew White Ridley's claims as uncontestedly superior to those of his opponent; but this soon wore away in the presence of Mr. Gully's tactful and impartial discharge of his duties. Hence it happened that when the Unionists came back to power shortly

afterwards they confirmed him in his position, and he was, quite as a matter of course, again re-elected by the new House of Commons which assembled after the general election of 1900. Many years of useful work in the Chair are, it may be hoped, still before him. It would, therefore, be quite out of place in a work of this description to attempt anything like a survey of his career. We may, however, with confidence anticipate that the verdict which history will write upon his Speakership will be neither unflattering to him in a personal sense nor lacking in appreciation of the virtues which repose in his quiet, undemonstrative, yet strong handling of the House during his term of office.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### PARLIAMENT IN BEING—THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AT WORK.

THE first function performed by a newly elected House of Commons is the election of the Speaker, who is chosen, generally unanimously, as president of the assembly and mouthpiece of the House as a whole. The ceremony is interesting and attractive as marking the first act the chosen representatives of the people perform in Parliament when assembling together for the first time.

The House on these occasions presents an animated appearance. Fresh from the House of Lords after receiving directions from his Majesty's Commissioners to proceed to elect their Speaker, members crowd the benches, and the galleries are also full of visitors. The proceedings are opened by the Clerk of the House, who, as the chief permanent official, rises from his seat at the table and points with his finger to a gentleman who, it has been arranged, is to propose a fellow member for Speaker. The motion is seconded by another member, usually belonging to the opposite political party when the choice of Speaker is unanimous, and both proposer and seconder are generally leading but unofficial members of their respective parties. No other nomination having been made, the Speaker-elect rises in his place and expresses his sense of the honour proposed to be conferred upon him, and his willingness to accept the office. He is then

conducted along the floor to the Speaker's Chair, from the steps of which he tenders his thanks and acknowledgments to the House and seats himself in the Chair amid loud cheers. The mace, which until now has been under the table, is placed upon the table by the Sergeant-at-Arms in full view of the House—a position it occupies during the sitting of the House with the Speaker in the Chair. Congratulations to Mr. Speaker-elect are then made by the leading members, and the House immediately adjourns. In the event of more than one candidate being proposed for the office, a debate and division follow, the Clerk of the House directing the proceedings, and appointing the tellers for the division. Upon only two occasions<sup>1</sup> during the last sixty-three years has a contest occurred. The next day the Speaker-elect (without his official robes or wig, but in Court dress), attended by the Commons, proceeds to the House of Lords to receive from the Lord Chancellor the approval of his Majesty the King, which having been given in due form, the First



THE HOUSE IS CONSTITUTED.

The Sergeant-at-Arms in the act of placing the mace upon the table.

<sup>1</sup> In 1839 Mr. Charles Shaw Lefevre, afterwards Viscount Eversley (Liberal), was elected Speaker over Mr. Henry Goulburn (Conservative) by 317 against 299 votes. In 1895 Mr. William Court Gully, Q.C. (Liberal), was elected over Sir Matthew White Ridley (Conservative) by 285 against 271 votes.

Commoner claims for himself and on behalf of the Commons all their undoubted rights and privileges, "especially freedom of speech in debate, freedom from arrest of their persons and servants, and above all freedom of access to his Majesty whenever occasion shall require it." He also prays that if any error may be committed it shall be imputed to him alone, and not to the faithful Commons. The Lord Chancellor, on behalf of the King, confirms all the rights and privileges, and the Speaker and Commons return to their own House. The former then takes the oath as follows: "I, —, do swear that I will be faithful to his Majesty King Edward VII., his heirs and successors, according to law. So help me, God." The business of swearing in members proceeds in an appointed order, the Speaker going through the ceremony first. It is optional whether members take the oath or make an affirmation to the same effect.<sup>1</sup>



INDUCTION OF THE SPEAKER-ELECT.

The proposer and seconder conduct the Speaker-elect along the floor of the House to the Speaker's Chair.

The House of Commons may now be said to be properly constituted for the transaction of business. This begins each session, as already described, with his Majesty's speech from the throne in the House of Lords, delivered by the Sovereign or the Royal Commissioners appointed under the Great Seal, in the presence of the Commons, who have been summoned to the Bar of the Upper House by the Black Rod. The speech relates events of public importance which have happened since the last prorogation, the Government legislative programme for the ensuing session, and other matters of national interest it is thought desirable to communicate to the nation.

The recognised period occupied by an ordinary

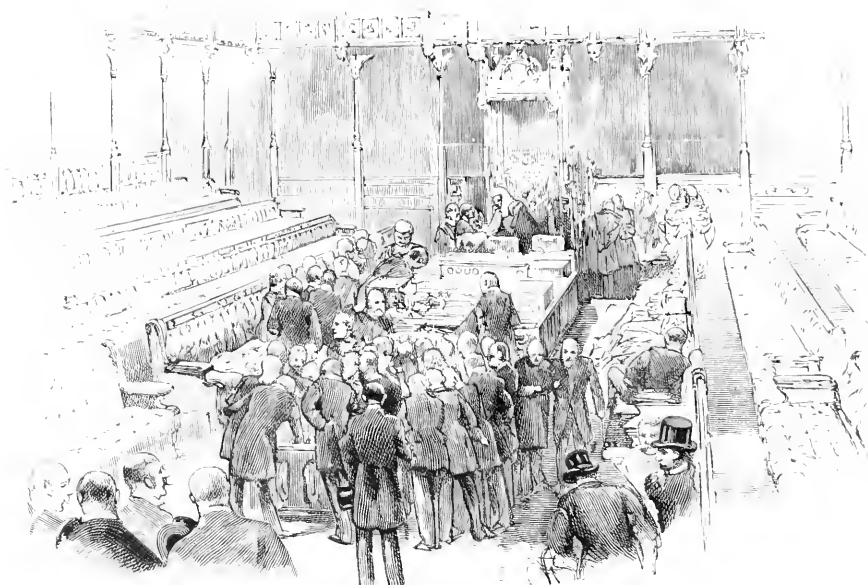
session of Parliament is six months of the year—the Houses meeting at the beginning of February, and proroguing by the middle of August, with short intervals of adjournment at Easter and Whitsuntide. It not infrequently happens, however, that exceptional pressure of public affairs or financial exigencies render it necessary for the Houses to sit until late in the summer, or hold a further meeting before Christmas. The decision as to whether an adjourned sitting is necessary rests with the Government, but the hours of meeting and the general arrangements for conducting business in the House of Commons are regulated by standing orders and sessional resolutions, agreed to by the House itself, while certain unwritten customs prevail, the breach of which is quickly resented. The time of meeting has varied according to the social customs of the period. Turning to the journals of the House, we find that in 1604 members assembled at 6 a.m., and a few years later at 7 a.m. In 1641, on

<sup>1</sup> Formerly the oath, by a statute of the 7th Elizabeth, was taken before the Lord Steward, but the enactment was repealed in 1829, and the present procedure substituted.



ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, WESTMINSTER.

The interior of the well-known building which serves as a parish church for the House of Commons.



SWEARING IN MEMBERS AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Members taking the oath at the table at the opening of a new Parliament.

Sunday, August 8th, a meeting took place at 6 a.m. to enable members to attend St. Margaret's Church to hear prayers and sermon. It was a long service, apparently, for the return to the House was not made until nine o'clock. The House rose at twelve o'clock in the day. Later on the custom of early sittings was abandoned, and the hour of assembly was fixed for twelve o'clock. It gradually got later until in the middle of the eighteenth century, when members met as late as four o'clock, and the sittings were conducted without any stated time for adjournment. This arrangement continued until recent times, when a revision of the rules was made, by virtue of which the House met on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at three o'clock, and sat until not later than 1 a.m., no opposed business being taken after midnight. On Wednesdays the sitting lasted from 12 noon until 6 p.m. The day was given up to the discussion of private members' bills, excepting towards the close of the session, when the Government monopolised the whole time of the House with its own work. In the present session a sweeping change in the whole system of arranging business has been made after prolonged debates in the House. Under the new rules, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday the sittings commence at 2 p.m. and may extend to 1 a.m., with an adjournment for dinner between 7.30 p.m. and 9 p.m., and Friday becomes the off day, the hours of business being from 12 noon to 6 p.m., as on Wednesday under the old system.

The business of the session commences with the consideration of the Royal speech, but before the discussion is actually entered upon, in order to assert the right to act without reference to any authority than their own, the Commons (and also the Lords) invariably at the beginning of each session read a bill a first time *pro forma*. In the Lords this custom is regulated by standing order, in the Commons by usage. The practice in the House of Commons takes the form of the Clerk holding in his hand a dummy form of a bill and reading out the title: "Outlawries Bill—for the more efficient preventing clandestine outlawries."



The bill is thus read a first time and ordered to be read a second time, but no day is fixed for further proceeding with it. In the session of 1794 a member endeavoured to raise a debate upon this proceeding, but the Speaker ruled him out of order.

The origin of this formality may probably be traced to the reign of James I., as in 1604<sup>1</sup> the Houses were occupied with a case respecting the liberties and privileges of the Commons. The incident arose out of the election of Sir Francis Goodwin as knight of the shire for Bucks, and the refusal of the return of his election by the Clerk of the Crown—" *Quia allegatus* (outlawed)." Another writ was issued and Sir John Fortescue elected. A long debate took place, and it was decided "Sir F. Goodwin was duly elected and (*de jure*) ought to be received." He took the oath and his seat in the House. The House of Lords took the matter up and requested a conference with the Commons; the latter objected, stating "that they do conceive it does not stand in honour and order of the House to give account of any of their proceedings and doings." On the intervention of the King eventually a conference took place with the judges, with the result that it was decided that neither member was allowed to have the seat, and a warrant for a new election was allowed by the Commons, they having admitted that by receiving Goodwin "outlaws may be makers of laws, which is contrary to all law," and an Act was prepared "that outlaws henceforward shall stand disabled to serve in Parliament."

The inference from this seems to be that the Commons, resenting the interferences of Lords and King in 1604, although it was apparently justified in the particular case, from that time to the present have introduced an Outlawries Bill in form every session, but in doing so have taken the opportunity of acting in the matter independent of the Royal message as to the cause of Parliament being summoned—a sort of retaliation for having in former days been compelled to admit itself in the wrong in insisting upon an outlaw taking his place in the House.



LOWER SMOKING-ROOM, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A popular place of resort for members, who are permitted to introduce their friends without restriction.

<sup>1</sup> Parry's "Parliaments and Councils."

When the King's speech is reached, the Speaker, explaining that he has obtained "for greater accuracy" a copy of the document, reads it to the House, and meanwhile it is circulated by the Vote Office to members of the Commons and the representatives of the Press. Two supporters of the Government now respectively propose and second an address thanking his Majesty. It is the practice for these gentlemen to appear in Court dress or uniform, a custom for which no absolute reason can be assigned, though it has been conjectured by Parliamentary authorities that this is the last remains of what was seen in the middle of the nineteenth century when "the floor of the House presented a gay scene; members wore their orders and stars glittered on the benches, both to the right and left of the Speaker." A notable exception to the old custom took place a few years back, when one of the Labour



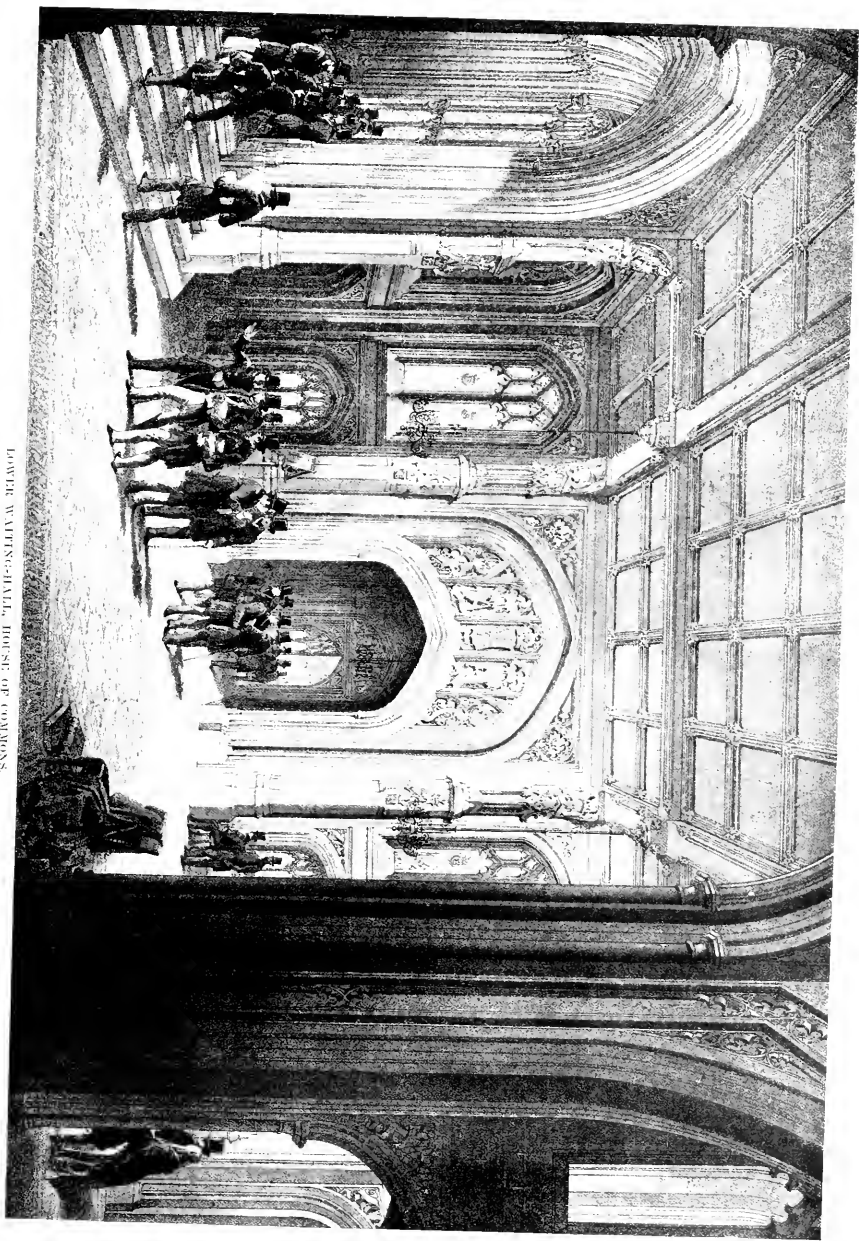
VOTE OFFICE.

From this office the votes and proceedings, Bills, and Parliamentary papers are issued to members. The department is under the control of the Speaker.

members who was selected to second the address appeared in ordinary evening dress upon the occasion.

The discussion of the King's speech may range over the whole field of politics—Government doings and misdoings during the recess, proposals of legislation and non-proposals, and matters of general interest—and although in former times the debate was usually finished in one or two nights, in recent sessions a week has been considered a moderate time to occupy; occasionally a fortnight or even longer has been taken up by the various questions raised.<sup>1</sup> An important paragraph appears in the Royal message and is addressed to members of the House of Commons only. It states that the estimates for the public service shall be presented to them, and upon the conclusion of the general debate upon the speech the House resolves that upon a certain day it will appoint the Committee of Supply to consider the demands of

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1887 sixteen sittings were occupied by the proceedings in connection with the Queen's speech.



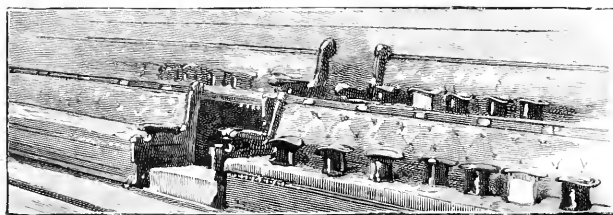
LOWER WATTS-HALL, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

This portion of the House is chiefly used by Parliamentary orators and agents and others engaged in legislative work.

the Sovereign for means to maintain the Army and Navy, and other branches of the public service. The Committee having thus been set up, certain allotted days are thenceforward devoted throughout the session to it. As a corollary to Supply, the Committee of Ways and Means accompanies its partner through the session, devoting its attention to the manner in which the supplies granted shall be raised, its chief function being the consideration of the Budget resolutions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who in Committee of Ways and Means sets forth his proposals by presenting a balance sheet for the year of the finances of the nation, explaining what revision, addition, or reduction of taxation is to take place.

A confusion sometimes arises in the minds of newcomers as to the functions and practice of these two Committees. They are distinct from each other, each comprising the whole House without a Speaker. The president is a member (empowered to act as Deputy Speaker when necessary). He is appointed for the Parliament, with a salary of £2,500 per annum.<sup>1</sup> The proceedings of the Committees are subject to the revision of the House itself, and although the Commons may amend the Committees' proceedings, which eventually form a bill, the House of Lords cannot amend or alter, but only pass or reject it. Supply decides the amount of money to be granted and the manner in which it shall be spent; Ways and Means the method of raising it.

Prayers are read daily by the Speaker's chaplain immediately after the Speaker enters



MAKING A HOUSE.

A member is by custom allowed to reserve a seat by placing his hat on the place he desires to occupy.

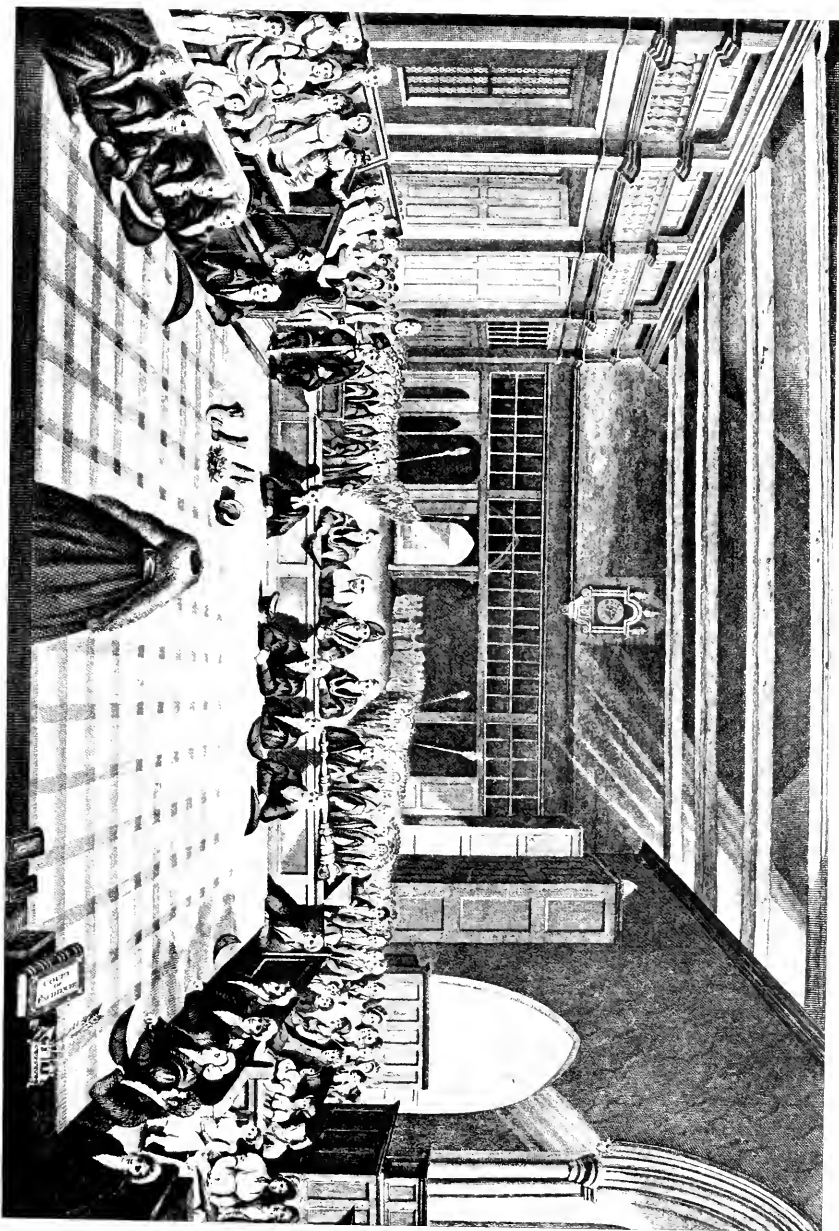
the House. At prayers the doors are closed and no strangers or representatives of the Press are permitted to be present. The occupants of the Ladies' Gallery are not disturbed, for this portion of the Chamber having a brass "grille" in front is technically outside the precincts of the House. The Speaker, standing at the table, gives the responses.

and members present stand at their places in front of their seats. Attendance is optional at prayers; but by attending a member is entitled to secure a particular seat until the rising of the House, he fixing thereon a card, provided for the purpose, with his name upon it. Ministers of the Crown, who occupy the front bench on the right of the Speaker, and ex-Ministers that on his left, have seats permanently allotted to them. While Committees are sitting, members serving upon them, and in attendance, are entitled to the privilege of securing a seat in the House before prayers by applying for a particular kind of ticket at the Vote Office.

The system of securing places has been adopted in consequence of the insufficiency of the seating accommodation<sup>2</sup> for the whole House at one time; but by general practice a seat is usually reserved for a member who has left his hat upon it, and by courtesy members of long standing and generally recognised position are usually conceded the right to occupy the same places. At times of special interest so great is the anxiety to secure a seat that members will arrive before daylight; and upon the introduction of the Home Rule Bill by Mr. Gladstone in 1892, Mr. Speaker Peel was asked to fix an hour before which no seat should be appropriated. He decided that upon this particular occasion twelve o'clock noon would be reasonable, and stated that "great inconvenience, almost indecorum, has arisen from members coming into this House at the dawn of day, and even before it. The House has to be cleaned, and the servants have to be here for the purpose, so that if members arrive at an inconveniently early hour it will interfere with that proceeding." At the appointed time a crowd of members assembled

<sup>1</sup> In the present session a Deputy Chairman has been appointed, without salary.

<sup>2</sup> The number of seats for the use of members in the House at the present time is 440.



# PRESENTATION OF SHERIFFS AT WESTMINSTER.

When the Law Courts were situated at Westminster, it was customary for the Sheriff to attend in State on June 2nd, to be sworn in before the Chief Baron of the Exchequer. The picture represents one of these ceremonies.

at the door of the House, the whole of the seats were quickly appropriated, and chairs placed along the floor.

A quorum is necessary at the beginning of business, and, prayers being concluded, the Speaker may, if he thinks fit, count the House. If forty members are present, he takes the Chair; if not, waiting until four o'clock, he counts again, and the requisite number still not attending, he adjourns the House till next day. Why forty forms the quorum out of a House of six hundred and seventy members is a question that frequently occurs to a newcomer, and even the experienced member may not be aware that in 1640 the Commons decided that "it be a constant rule that Mr. Speaker is not to go into the Chair till there be at least forty members in the House." It has been conjectured by a historian of that period that as forty was the number of English counties (excluding Wales), the intention of the House was that the equivalent number of members, one for each county, should be present for the transaction of affairs. Whatever the origin of the rule, it is strictly observed. Upon notice being taken that forty members are not present, the Speaker orders strangers to withdraw, and electric bells are rung throughout the building for two minutes, giving notice to those within the precincts of the fact that the House is about to be counted, and if a quorum is not forthcoming, the House at once adjourns.



BUSINESS INDICATOR, SMOKING ROOM, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Designed to show members the position of business in the House of Commons at a given moment.

Many and ingenious devices are adopted by members interested in the burking of particular business to secure an adjournment by the simple means of reducing the attendance below the minimum. There is a well-authenticated story of a new member who had rushed in breathless at the summons of the electric bells for a count being met at the entrance to the Lobby by an arch-plotter with a bland invitation to pair, and of his falling innocently into the

trap and going contentedly away, while his absence just served to make the "count" successful.

Petitioning Parliament for the redress of grievances is, in the words of Lord Peel, when Speaker, "an ancient and most valuable right, but its value can only be maintained if the petitions presented to this House are genuine, authentic, and are the free and unfettered expression of the wishes of the people." The words were spoken in 1887, when one Reginald Bidmead, brought to the Bar of the House by the Sergeant-at-Arms, was publicly reprimanded for forging sixteen or seventeen hundred names to various petitions, an offence for which, he was reminded, men had in quite recent times been committed to Newgate. It is therefore of some importance that the practice and general rules governing these expressions of the wishes of the people to their representatives should be understood, although in these days less weight is perhaps attached to this method of calling attention to grievances. Upon receiving the petition, which may be despatched free of postage within certain limits, before presenting it to the House the member must see that it is written in the English language, or if accompanied by a translation, he must certify that it is correct (printed, lithographed, or typewritten documents are not accepted), and the address of every person signing the petition must also be there. Moreover, the language used must be respectful and temperate, free from imputations upon the character of Parliament, the administration of the law or other constituted authorities; nor is reference permitted to be made to any debate in Parliament,

although if the petition relates to any matter or subject to which the member presenting it may intend calling attention, he may propose that the petition be printed and circulated with the proceedings of the House. It is the practice for the member to sign his name at the top as a means of identification, and he may present it openly to the House after prayers, or deposit it less publicly in the proper quarter by placing it in a large bag hanging at the side of the table. A more picturesque method with regard to petitions from the Corporation of the City of London is adopted. The Sheriffs attending in their State robes are permitted to come to the Bar of the House, and the Sergeant-at-Arms, with the mace, introduces them. The Corporation of Dublin are entitled to the same privilege, their Lord Mayor, fully accoutred with his emblems of office and attended by his officers, entering the precincts of the House, and, being observed by the Speaker, is challenged by him. "My Lord Mayor of Dublin, what have you there?" the answer being a recital of the substance of the



ST. STEPHEN'S PORCH, OLD PALACE YARD.

The public entrance to the House of Commons, House of Lords, and Westminster Hall.

petition. The time-honoured custom of entertaining a number of members to dinner at the House is followed by both the Sheriffs of the City of London and the Lord Mayor of Dublin. All petitions presented to the House are referred to a Select Committee appointed early in the session: they are carefully examined, and reports are periodically published giving a general summary of the particulars of the prayer and number of signatures, the actual petitions being stored away among the archives of Parliament.

Question time affords an opportunity for the stranger visiting the House of witnessing one of the most interesting periods of the sitting, and supplies a means of identifying many of the unofficial members and most of the Ministers. Many and varied are the topics touched upon, from the supposed unfair treatment of an obscure postal official in the West of Ireland to the latest move of the Government in their foreign policy. The answers given, although sometimes purely of the departmental order, are not infrequently amusing and entertaining. An attempt to corner a Minister by a well-timed supplementary question arising out of his answer is invariably received by his opponents with acclamation; the skilful answer turning the tables upon the inquirer never fails to be appreciated by both sides of the House. Notice of questions for a future day are written out and handed in to the Clerk of the Table and are subject to revision under the direction of the Speaker; they then appear in the

printed proceedings of the House, and in due course take their place upon the orders of the day. They may be answered orally or by means of the answers being printed and circulated with the votes the following morning. The questions are grouped for the convenience of Ministers; those to the Leader of the House are by arrangement placed at the bottom of the list, a system which was adopted when Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister, in order to afford him the opportunity of arriving at the House later in the afternoons. The practice is for the Speaker to call upon the member whose name appears first upon the list. The gentleman indicated then rises in his place and says: "I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer question No. 1," as the case may be, and so on, it being contrary to the rule now to read the terms of the questions, although until recent years the practice of reading



GROUP OF VOTE OFFICE MESSENGERS.

The corps employed to distribute the votes and proceedings and Parliamentary papers amongst the members.

them throughout was retained. The change was brought about in consequence of a section of members during a stormy period of politics making full use of this opportunity of prolonging the proceedings by asking a great many questions of extreme length, upon subjects of limited interest, and reading them word for word. The Minister concerned has had notice of the question to be asked sent him, and when the time arrives to reply, he usually reads out the answer which has been written out by the officers of his departments. In matters considered urgent a private notice sent the same day may suffice, and where the general convenience of the House is concerned, a question may be asked and answered without previous notice. The popularity of questions may be gauged from the fact that while the number handed in varies according to the period of the session, it is not an uncommon experience to find seventy or eighty upon the order paper for one day. Even upwards of a hundred of such questions have been known to be asked and answered at a single sitting.

The ambition of the representatives of the people to prove their usefulness in Parliament





*London Convention, A. D. 1834.*

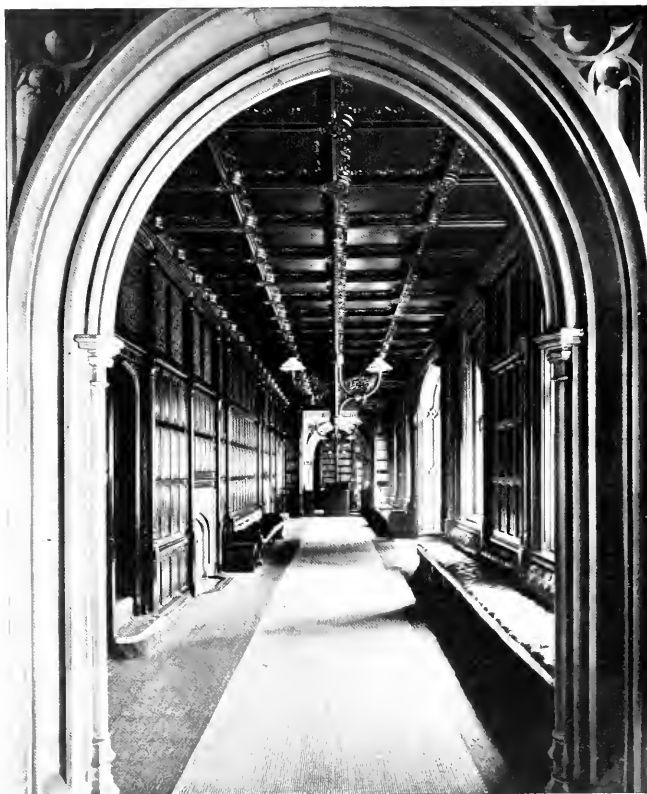
MAYOR AND SHERIFFS ATTENDING IN THEIR ROBES OF OFFICE TO PRESENT A PETITION AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The Corporation of the City of London shares with the Dublin Corporation the right of directly presenting a petition to the House of Commons.

is strikingly shown by the number of public bills introduced in each session<sup>1</sup> by unofficial members on both sides of the House. The distinction between private and public bills is wide, for though each class undergoes equivalent treatment in the House by being read three times, the Committee stage is of an entirely different nature. In the introduction of a private or local bill the House must first be approached by petition (as was the system for public bills up to the reign of Henry VI.), and seeking, as the measures do, powers to construct railways, tramways, and facilities for gas and water undertakings, or similar projects, their passage through Parliament is conducted mainly by agents employed by the promoters of the bills. The particulars are thoroughly sifted by a small Committee, and counsel are engaged and heard both for and against the details. Though the House may reject a private bill on second or third reading, this course is rarely followed.

Public bills introduced by the Government of the day form the main features of the order paper. They have all the facilities for being introduced and considered the executive can command, and in the later months of the session the whole time of the

House is usually in the hands of the Ministers. The unofficial or so-called private member is in a very different position. His little measure may meet at every turn with delays and misfortunes, and may drag its weary life through the whole session without getting beyond the initial stage, disappearing in the closing days. At the outset the elements of chance have to be encountered, a ballot deciding priority of first reading or introduction. The ballot is really for first places on an early Friday of the session, for the longer the second reading is delayed the less chance a bill will stand of being discussed. Therefore, excepting for the first few Fridays available, a considerable amount of in-



*From a photo by Charles Beckett.*

THE "AYE" DIVISION LOBBY.

One of the division lobbies at the side of the House of Commons into which members go when a division is called.

<sup>1</sup> Three hundred public bills were introduced in the session of 1901.



A STORAGE ROOM, VOTE OFFICE.

One of the chambers in the basement in which Parliamentary papers are stored.

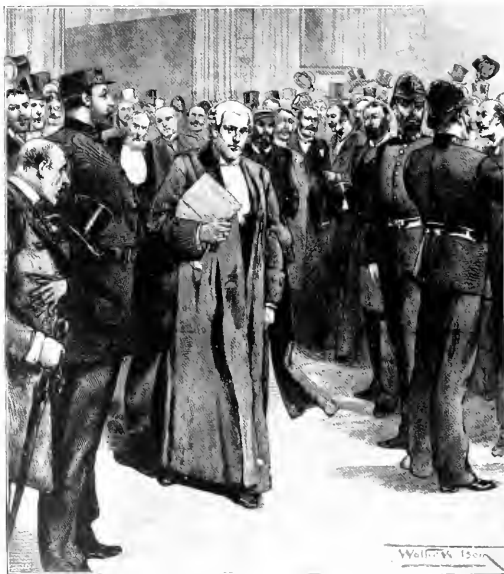
generosity will be exercised in fixing a day for second reading, when the principle of the bill is discussed—this stage being the critical one, as by general practice the first reading is allowed without objection, although in some cases the House has exercised its right in refusing to allow the introduction of a bill.<sup>1</sup> The measure is introduced in “dummy” form, simply bearing its title, but before second reading it is by order of the House printed and circulated among members, who have the privilege of sending to their constituents and others interested an authorised number of copies, which are despatched from the Vote Office free of postage, members signing their names upon the corner of the wrappers provided for the purpose. This, the last remains of the old “franking” system abolished in 1840, is a privilege keenly appreciated by members, many thousands of copies of the various measures introduced being annually circulated throughout the kingdom.

The second reading accomplished, Committee, and, if the bill is amended, report stage as well as third reading have to be gone through. Here another dilemma presents itself, for the chance of a measure passing this ordeal before Whitsuntide is remote, unless it is of such a nature that opposition may be dispensed. On the third and fourth Fridays after Whit Sunday bills are arranged upon the order paper so as to give priority to those most forward, and the session being so far advanced, Government business occupies the whole time of the House for the remainder of the session. With this brief survey of the difficulties experienced by a private member in getting his little bill through the Commons alone, afterwards to pass the scrutiny of the Upper House, it may be readily understood that not five per cent of the non-Government measures introduced have an opportunity of even being discussed.

The right of voting supplies of money for the public service, a reference to which has

<sup>1</sup> On June 17th, 1875, Dr. Kenealy was refused leave to bring in a bill in favour of triennial Parliaments.

already been made, is a function which has been vested in the Commons for centuries, and is one of the most ancient rights possessed by that assembly. A considerable amount of time is occupied by supply, and of recent years it has been found necessary, with the curtailment of the hours of sitting, to frame special rules<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of keeping the discussions within reasonable limits. After the estimates are presented and printed, Thursdays are allotted almost exclusively for considering them, the House going into Committee without previous discussion immediately after private business and questions are finished. Twenty days, subject to three additional days being proposed at the discretion of the Government, all before August 5th, are allowed for the Army, Navy, and Civil Service estimates, including votes on account. On the last but one of the allotted days, at 10 p.m., the Chairman puts forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the outstanding votes, and the following day, also at 10 p.m., the Speaker adopts a similar method to complete the report stages. Supplementary estimates relating to a previous session and votes of credit are exempted from these rules. A standing order of the House gives facilities for raising a preliminary discussion on first going into Committee of Supply on the Army, Navy, and Civil Service estimates respectively, or a vote of credit, should an amendment be moved relating to the estimates proposed to be taken. This is popularly known as "moving the Speaker out of the Chair," and in the case of the Army and Navy affords an opportunity for a general survey of the position of these important parts of the public service. In Committee considerable latitude is allowed in discussing the items of the estimates, and a reduction or omission of any of them may be proposed to accentuate a particular grievance brought forward, but although the Committee, or subsequently the House on report, may grant, refuse, or reduce an item in the estimates, an increase cannot be proposed.



*From a drawing by J. Walter Wilson.*

PASSAGE OF MR. GLADSTONE'S SECOND HOME RULE BILL FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

The Clerk of the House of Commons carries the bill to the Bar of the House of Lords

For centuries the House possessed no power of terminating a debate, but the prolonged sittings of 1881 on the introduction of a Government bill for the better protection of person and property in Ireland led the Speaker (Mr. Brand), after a debate lasting forty-two hours, to refuse further discussion, and it became evident that some rule was necessary to govern such proceedings in future. The power now possessed by the House of closing a debate has been substantially in its present form in operation since 1887, although the principle of a closure was agreed to in 1882, a special autumn session in the latter year having been held to deal with the rules of procedure. The decision of the House then upon the question placed the responsibility upon the Speaker of initiating the closure by interpreting the "evident sense of the House." But the standing order now in force allows any member to rise in his place after a question has been proposed, and to move

<sup>1</sup> Since 1896 a sessional resolution has been agreed to early each session dealing with the business of supply.





from the painting by G. F. Watts, R.A., by his special permission

# THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, K.G.

The first of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers. He was first appointed to the highest office in the Ministry in 1851 and was re-appointed in 1858, 1859, 1866, 1873, 1885, 1891, 1895, and 1900. He resigned, finally, in 1905.



THE POST OFFICE, HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The office in the Lobby in which the bulk of the postal and telegraph business of members is transacted.

"that the question be now put," his proposal being at once put to the vote, unless it appears to the Chair that to do so would be an abuse of the rules of the House or an infringement of the rights of the minority. Provision is made by the rule for following up and deciding any further proceedings dependent upon the particular question carried by closure, even though the hour of adjournment has arrived, but in order to carry the closure, upon a division taking place not less than one hundred members must have voted in the majority in support of the motion. The rule may be put in force when either the Speaker, Chairman of Ways and Means, or Deputy Chairman is presiding.

The rules and orders of the House governing the general transaction of business, order of debate, conduct of members, etc., have been settled, some by standing orders agreed to at an ancient period, some by tradition, while others are of comparatively recent date, and have been adopted to meet the requirements of the assembly when called upon at times of unforeseen difficulties which the existing orders were unable to deal with. Framed for the well-being and general convenience of the whole body of members, certain of the rules are in practice worked with an elasticity suitable to the wishes of the various sections of the House.

A member is in duty bound to attend the service of the House unless leave of absence has been obtained on account of illness or other sufficient cause, the notice of motion granting him leave stating the reason and period of absence required, during which time he is exempted from serving upon any Committee to which he may have been appointed. This rule is not now so frequently resorted to as formerly, the system of pairing taking the place of the time-honoured custom of asking leave. By pairing, a member makes an arrangement with another of the opposite party, both agreeing to absent themselves for the time required, and their votes in divisions for party purposes are thereby neutralised. For the convenience of members, a book is placed near the entrance to the House showing the pairs arranged.



THE DEPUTY SPEAKER'S OFFICE.

A characteristic specimen of the private apartments allotted to high Parliamentary officials.

Members entering or leaving the House uncover, and, passing to their seats, bow to the Speaker or occupant of the Chair, and it is a breach of order to pass between the Chair and a member speaking from the lower benches, or between the Chair and the mace when the latter has been taken off the table by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

In a debate a Minister or ex-Minister rising is called upon to speak; but two or more unofficial members rising together, the Speaker calls upon the member who is first observed by him, or who, in popular phraseology, "catches his eye." The House can, however, determine which member shall first be heard should the Speaker's call be questioned. By courtesy, a new member who has not spoken in the Parliament is generally called upon in preference to others rising at the same time. A member should address himself to the Chair, and he may not read his speech, though notes for reference are permitted. He may only speak once upon the same question, though under certain conditions he may offer an explanation to remove any misunderstanding of any part of his speech. The mover of a substantive motion is allowed to reply to the arguments against it; and a member who has moved an order of the day, such as the second reading of a bill, etc., by merely raising his hat without rising, reserves his speech for a later period of the debate. It is contrary to order to use the name of his Majesty for the purpose of influencing the House in its deliberations, or to refer to a member by name, the practice in the latter case being to use the words "the right honourable gentleman," or "the honourable member for —," stating the constituency represented.

Upon the termination of a debate the Speaker—or if the House is in Committee, the Chairman—rises in his place and, putting the question to be decided, adds, "As many as are of that opinion will say 'Aye,' the contrary 'No,'" and declares in his opinion by the number



of voices whether the "Ayes" or "Noes" have it. His decision being challenged, he directs strangers to withdraw and the House proceeds to a division. A two-minute sand-glass upon the table is turned by the Clerk, and notice is given by electric bells, and by the stentorian shouts of "Division" by the police, to members in the various parts of the building that a vote is about to be taken. After the lapse of the two minutes' grace allowed, the doors of the House are locked and the Speaker again puts the question. His decision still being challenged, he directs the "Ayes" to go to the right lobby and the "Noes" to the left, and appoints two tellers for each side. The tellers are members, and, in the case of party divisions, are usually the Whips. One of these functionaries from each party take their stand together at the exit doors of the lobbies, and in that position they count the number of members passing through. Clerks stationed at desks record their names for subsequent publication in a list which is printed and circulated with the votes and proceedings. At the conclusion of a division the tellers walk up to the table and report the numbers, the Speaker announcing the result to the House. In case the numbers are equal, the Speaker has to give a casting vote, the practice being adopted in this event of voting in such a manner that a further opportunity may be afforded the House of deciding the question, and the reasons, if given by the Speaker, are entered in the journals. All members present in the House when the question is put from the Chair are required to vote, but any member having a direct pecuniary interest in a question which is about to be decided is not entitled to take part in the division, and should he do so his vote is liable to be disallowed. A provision is in force by which the Speaker or Chairman, if in his opinion a division is frivolously or vexatiously claimed, may take the vote by calling upon both sides successively to rise in their places; and he may declare the determination of the House without a division, the names of the minority being taken down by the Clerk in the House and printed with the list of divisions.

Tolerant as the House shows itself to any of its members who unintentionally commit a breach of order, it will quickly resent disorderly conduct and deliberate disregard of the authority of the Chair. In an assembly of divided opinion Parliamentary politics will sometimes drift into personal feeling, accompanied by scenes of turbulence and excitement. The present House of Commons has means at its command for the maintenance of order in debate and for checking disorderly conduct. Irrelevance or tedious repetition persisted in may lead to the member so offending being ordered to discontinue his speech; gross disorder, to his being ordered to immediately withdraw from the House for the remainder of the sitting; and the serious offence of disregarding the authority of the Chair, wilfully and persistently obstructing the business of the House, will bring upon him the danger of being "named" by the Speaker with the penalty of being suspended from the service of the House.<sup>1</sup>



*From a drawing by Sir Frank Lockwood, Q.C.*

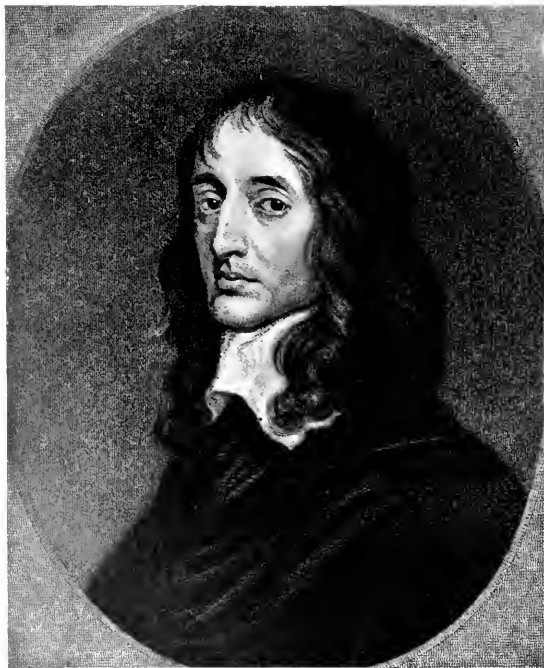
One of the many clever caricatures produced by the lamented Queen's Counsel during the period he sat in the House.

<sup>1</sup> A revision of the rules of procedure was under consideration while this chapter was in the press.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### CALLED TO THE BAR—PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE.

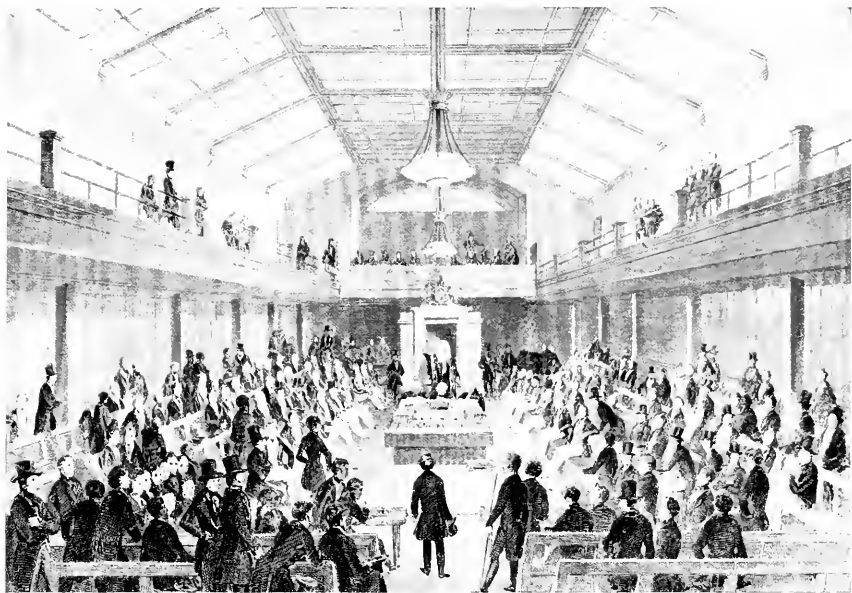
THE exercise of the punitive powers of the House of Commons supplies one of the most interesting chapters in the history of Parliament. Though essentially a deliberative body, the popular chamber has reposed in it in certain circumstances a judicial authority independent of the Courts of Law, and even at times in supersession of them. The House can order an offender against its code to durance vile without trial other than that which it decrees, and as long as Parliament is in session the prisoner cannot secure his freedom except by the will of the assembly. Privilege is the bed-rock of this far-reaching power. Contempt of the High Court of Parliament, like the ordinary contempt of a judicial tribunal, brings into play forces outside and beyond the ordinary machinery of the law. As there is no appeal from the decree of the insulted judge on the Bench who summarily commits to prison a violator of the decencies of his court, so there is none to call in question the penal measures taken by the House of Commons for the vindication of its offended majesty.



JOHN SELDEN,

The great Parliamentarian and patriot, who took such a prominent part in the struggle preceding the Civil War.

What exactly constitutes Parliamentary privilege it would be difficult to say. For centuries controversy has raged over the question without a definite understanding being reached as to the limits to which the strong arm of the House may extend in cases where it considers that offence has been given. As we shall show, at different periods a singularly wide range has been given to this legislative version of the doctrine of *lèse majesté*. The House has elected to be its own interpreter of its prerogatives, and naturally in such circumstances they have varied with the changing conditions and sentiments of the times. Selden, the great Parliamentarian of the Civil War period, once said: "Parliament men are as great princes as any in the world. What-soever they please is privilege of Parliament; what-soever they dislike is breach of privilege." That shrewd description aptly described the position in his day,



THE SPEAKER REPRIMANDING AN OFFENDER AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The chamber shown in the view is the temporary structure erected after the fire which destroyed the old Houses of Parliament.

and it still to a certain extent applies. In these broad outlines the rights and powers of the House are understood; but he would be a clever constitutionalist who could say absolutely where they begin and where they end. Less of doubt surrounds the origin of Parliamentary privilege. It is unquestionably, as history clearly shows, a creation of the great battle for freedom fought in the earlier centuries of Parliamentary government. The right of liberty of speech persistently demanded and finally grudgingly conceded carried with it the power to protect the House collectively from the violation of its privacy, and the member individually from the consequences of words uttered in the chamber. Naturally flowing from such power was the authority to punish whatever tended to restrict the free discharge by members of their duties, whether it were in the nature of physical compulsion, or in the indirect form of written libels.

The earliest cases of breach of privilege recorded concern almost exclusively the position of members as it was affected by judicial processes. From the very infancy almost of Parliamentary government the legislator has been exempt from arrest for debt. In the reign of Edward I. we find the Templars, "who had certain tenants in the Parliament House who were behind with their rents," humbly petitioning the King to allow them "to distrain either their bodies or their goods for the same," and receiving in reply an emphatic refusal on the ground of the privileged position of the debtors. Less consideration was shown to a member of ancient times, Fearnie by name, who was committed to the Marshalsea for the vulgar offence of picking pockets, and was allowed to languish in that unsavoury retreat without the House raising a finger to protect him. But it seems to have been recognised from the very outset, and the principle obtains to this day, that privilege did not protect a member charged with offences against the criminal law. Sufficient was done by the authorities when, on the conviction of a legislator for such offences, they notified the Speaker of the fact, in order to allow him to understand that the detention was unavoidable. Such protection as was given in



*Here JENKINS stands, who, returning from the TOWER  
Shook the proud Senate's Legislative Power;  
Six of whose words twelv'd Crimes of votes exceed;  
As mountaine's merit of granges or mudday-feed:  
Thus garkins Lawes were refused from the Spere,  
So that will serve a Crowne must know and dare  
Sould by I. Giller at Fynivald-lan-gare. J. Berkenhead.*

DAVID JENKINS,

A Welsh judge who narrowly escaped being sentenced to death at the Bar of the House of Commons in the Civil War period.

the civic functionaries to reason. After a brief enjoyment of the discomforts of "the Little Ease," they made their submission. But the precise legal position of a gaoler holding a member imprisoned for debt was still left in doubt. In March, 1603, Sir Thomas Shirley having been committed to the Fleet, and a complaint having been made to the House of the fact, a debate was held as to the best means to adopt to secure his release. It was at first decided to send six members with the Sergeant and his mace to forcibly remove the prisoner. But the House thought better of this curious scheme, and finally agreed to try the effect of "the Little Ease" upon the recalcitrant gaoler. Their decision was a wise one, for one night's incarceration in the famous dungeon convinced the gaoler that he had better submit. He caused to be intimated to the House that he was prepared to deliver the prisoner up if he was absolved from the legal consequences. This, however, did not satisfy members. They demanded unconditional surrender. In the sequel they carried their point, and Mr. Gaoler was not in his turn released until he had on his knees at the Bar made humble confession of his fault and agreed to pay the fees incurred by his action.

From the speech of Henry VIII. quoted above, it is to be gathered that the privilege of a member was held to extend to his servants. This, in fact, was very much the case. The journals are strewn with records of complaints of interference with the liberty of individuals, many of whom were in the most nominal sense of the word servants. As far back as 1601 we find a Mr. William Cooke, a member, making a serious claim to the intervention of the House because his tailor had been seized for debt and cast into the Fleet Prison. Townsend, in his "Proceedings of Parliament," relates the upshot of the affair: "The

the first instance even in civil cases was conferred by the common law, and not by the action of the House itself. It is, in fact, not until the reign of Henry VIII. that we are brought into contact with the working of the Parliamentary machinery for the vindication of privilege. The "leading case" in this connection is that of Ferrers, a burgess of the King, who in the thirty-fourth year of Henry VIII. was arrested for debt and cast into the Counter Prison in the City of London. The Sergeant-at-Arms, who was promptly sent by the House to demand his release, was ill-treated, and his mace broken. Indignant at the insult offered their authority, the Commons committed the Sheriffs and the Clerk of the Counter to the Little Ease at the Tower. The King upheld them in this step. Addressing the Chancellor and the Speaker, he insisted that the member should have his privilege. "For," said he, "I understand that you, not only for yourselves, but also for your necessary servants, even to your cooks and housekeepers, enjoy the privilege inasmuch as my Lord Chancellor hath informed us that he being Speaker of the Parliament, the cook of the Temple was arrested in London, and as he served the Speaker in office during the Parliament, was taken out of execution by the privilege of Parliament."

Influence so powerful could not fail to bring





THE COMMONS CORRIDOR,

Leading from the Lobby to the great Central Hall. Strangers in the galleries are made to wait here during divisions.

person that arrested Mr. Cooke's man was brought in, who, after a sharp speech delivered by Mr. Speaker, showing that he had committed a heinous offence to arrest any member of the House or his servant, knowing that both their persons, their servants' goods, and everything they had were privileged during this great Council. *'How durst you presume to do it?'* To which the poor man answered upon his knees, *'That he knew not that his master was of the House. I do acknowledge that I have offended, and humbly crave pardon, and I protest upon my salvation I would not have done it had I known his master had been privileged.'* After this handsome amend the House could only extend a gracious pardon to the offender, though he had to discharge the fees before he was given his liberty.

Encouraged by the success which attended the enforcement of the principle in this and like cases, members of both Houses strained their prerogatives to a scandalous extent. According to Clarendon, protections were given *ad libitum*, and they were "commonly sold by their servants to bankrupt citizens, and to such who were able, but refused, to pay their just debts." So great were the demands made under the system that the citizens of London, when pressed for a loan by both Houses of Parliament in November, 1641, urged the existence of the custom as a reason for non-compliance with the demand. The most degrading feature of the practice was that members sold their protections for hard cash. As little as 16s. or 17s. was received by one member, a certain Mr. Benson, in the seventeenth century, for extending Parliamentary rights to fraudulent debtors. In his case the House was shamed into activity, and he was, for his conduct, declared by a vote of the House to be "unworthy and unfit to be a member," and expelled accordingly. A somewhat similar incident took place later, when Sir John Pretiman, who sat for Leicester, was suspended from sitting in the House for taking under his wing "a most notorious fellow," whom he falsely represented to be a menial servant in his

employ, but was actually only a commonplace rogue, who sought to evade his liabilities. Marvell, in his letters to his constituents, describes the curious sequel to the decree of the House: "The Sergeant was sent into the Speaker's chamber with his mace to bring him (Pretiman) to receive the sentence upon his knees at the Bar. Hereupon the House being disappointed (for in the meanwhile he was escaped by the back door) ordered that door to be nailed up for the future, have revived their votes of 1663 against all paper protections, against protections to any but menial servants; and to-day, after a long debate for expelling him, the House have for some good reason given him till the second Tuesday after our next meeting to appear." Pretiman managed to evade the penalty passed upon him. But, stirred to energy by the disclosures in his case, the Speaker in 1667 issued a mandate to call in all protections, with the result that it was found that as many as eight hundred persons were in the enjoyment of immunity from arrest in London and Middlesex alone. In consequence of the ferment caused by the action of the House, a startling case of oppression, nurtured under the system, was brought to light through the medium of a petition presented to the House by a Mrs. Cottington. This lady averred that Colonel Wanklyn, a member, gave protection to her husband, who was an independent gentleman with an income of £2,000 a year, to screen him from the consequences of an action that was pending in reference to the validity of their marriage. Even the morality of that lax age was shocked at this infamous perversion of the rights of privilege. When Colonel Wanklyn had been called upon to explain, and practically admitted his guilt, Mr. Hale, a county member, rose and said with a terseness which showed his horror and contempt: "This man is not fit to keep us company, and I humbly move that he may be turned out of the House." The proposal found favour with the members, who unanimously agreed to the motion for expulsion. There was a discussion as to whether the erring legislator should receive his sentence on his knees like any common Parliamentary malefactor; but he was spared this humiliation. Nevertheless, he was so sensible of the degradation of his position, that when he had been told the decision of the House he broke down completely, and, weeping, was led away by his friends.

Drastic as the action taken in these cases was, it was not entirely effectual. For many years afterwards the abuses of the rights of privilege continued to the scandal of good citizens, who found themselves deprived of their just dues through the readiness with which unscrupulous members lent their authority. It was not, in fact, until the eighteenth century was entered upon that the custom of extending protection to members' servants was finally abandoned. Even after that the right of privilege was occasionally abused.

There was a very gross case brought to light in 1807, when a member named Mills was discharged from custody on the strength of his privilege, although he had notoriously purchased his seat in order to escape payment of his debts, which amounted to a very large sum. An equally flagrant misuse of the Parliamentary position was made about the same time in the case of a Mr. Bourke, whose friends secured his return for a pocket borough in order to free him from the



*From an etching by Sherborn, by permission of Messrs. Agnew & Sons.*

SAMUEL PEPPYS.

The famous diarist, who made a memorable appearance at the Bar of the House of Commons.

King's Bench, where he was confined for debt. This individual actually never sat in the House. Immediately the prison doors were opened to him by the potent influence of privilege, he took his departure to the Continent, from whence he never returned.

Simultaneously with the misuse of the powers of Parliamentary privilege for sordid reasons, was a straining of the prerogatives on grounds more or less fantastic and trivial. A member's servant's cloak was retained at a tavern. Forthwith a solemn complaint was made to the House on grounds of privilege, and the unfortunate innkeeper was committed to prison. In another case a man employed by a member was confined for failing to contribute to the maintenance of an illegitimate child. With minute care the House investigated the matter, and finally rescued the peccant parent from his awkward position. Again, a tremendous stir was caused in Parliament in 1698 over the felling of a tree situate upon the estate of Sir Ralph Dutton, a member, by a neighbour, Mr. Greville. The momentous matter was in due form referred to a Committee of Privileges, who, after an exhaustive investigation, came to the conclusion "That Mr. Greville was not guilty of a breach of privilege in aiding and abetting the cutting down the tree called Forden Elm." But the most extraordinary case of all was one which formed the subject of debate at the close of 1661. It concerned the custody of a corpse, of all things. Sir Reginald Palgrave relates the particulars as follows, in his interesting little work, "The House of Commons": "A member, as executor to a will, was arranging the funeral of his dead friend. A quarrel arose, and the family took possession of the corpse, that they, and not the executor, might manage the burial. So he put his privileges in force, and, as is duly recorded in the journal of December 12th, 1661, the House of Commons sent their Sergeant and his messengers 'to make diligent search for the said corpse,' to the end that the said member of Parliament 'might decently inter the same.'"



TITUS OATES.

The informer and perjurer, standing in the pillory for his crimes.

Another singular case was that of John Ayloffe, who in 1638 was called to account for printing "The Appeal" and "The Votes of Parliament," and "for having laid, in a libellous manner, a wooden shoe in the Speaker's chair." How heinous this individual's offences were considered is to be gathered from the fact that in 1640 he is found<sup>1</sup> petitioning the King for pardon on the ground that he had been two years in exile. Also worth recalling is an incident related by Edward Harley in a letter to his father dated February 5th, 1697-8. "Mr. Powel's second son," says the writer, "was this day reprimanded upon his knees for saying some things that reflected upon the Lords of the Treasury which he could not make out. It put some in mind of the story of the jester that was whipt in Queen Elizabeth's time for calling the Lord Nottingham 'fool.'"

This question of Parliamentary privilege had its tragic as well as its amusing side. There is, for instance, the case of David Jenkins, a Welsh judge, who in the period immediately

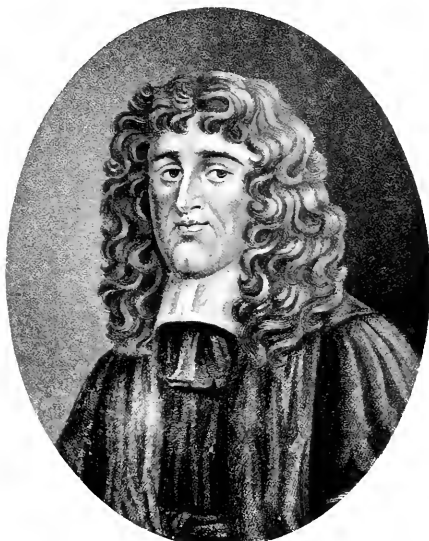
<sup>1</sup> Historical Manuscripts, Appendix, 5th Report, p. 235.



preceding the Civil War was actually condemned to death by a vote of the House of Commons for contempt of the High Court of Parliament. Jenkins, who was a staunch adherent of the Royalist cause, was brought to the Bar to answer for his judicial conduct in sentencing to death persons who had taken up arms against the King in Wales. In accordance with the usual practice the old fellow was required to kneel. His reply to the summons was a startling one: "Since you, Mr. Speaker, and this House, have renounced all your duty and allegiance to your sovereign and natural liege lord the King, and are become a den of thieves, should I bow myself in this House of Rimmon, the Lord would not pardon me in this thing." The House was in an uproar at once, and a motion was made and carried that Jenkins and Sir Francis Butler, who was associated with him at the Bar, should be condemned to death for high treason. Before steps could be taken to give effect to the motion, Henry Marten, an influential member of the Parliamentary party, put in a plea for reconsideration of the hasty action.

"Mr. Speaker," said he, "every one must believe that this old gentleman here is fully possessed in his head that he is *pro aris et focis mori*, that he should die a martyr for this cause, for otherwise he never would have provoked the House by such biting expressions; whereby it is apparent if you execute him, you do what he hopes for and desires, and whose execution might have a great influence upon the people, since not condemned by a jury. Wherefore my motion is that this House should suspend the day of execution, and in the meantime force him to live in spite of his teeth." This sensible appeal had its effect. Jenkins and his companion were committed to Newgate on the understanding that the sentence should be suspended. After a period of confinement, during which the old judge occupied himself in making elaborate preparations for his appearance upon the scaffold, they were set at liberty.

The degradation of kneeling at the Bar, from which the soul of the sturdy Jenkins revolted, was for centuries an inevitable accompaniment of an appearance before the House in the character of culprit. It was finally abandoned in 1750, as the result of the obstinate stand made by a Mr. Murray, who had incurred the displeasure of the House by his conduct in an election for the City of Westminster then just concluded. Mr. Murray was bracketed with a Mr. Crowle in the proceedings. The latter gentleman, who was accused of wilfully and unjustly protracting the scrutiny, and of using "disrespectful words in contempt of the authority of this House," ate his humble pie without demur. Murray was of sterner metal. When, after protracted proceedings, he was adjudged guilty of "dangerous and seditious practices in violation and contempt of the authority and privileges of this House and of the freedom of elections," he was ordered to kneel in the customary way to receive sentence, he flatly declined to comply. "Your obeisances, sir," shouted the Speaker. But still the culprit declined, and he continued in this mood in spite of all the commands made to him. The House was horror-struck at this flagrant defiance. As soon as it recovered its equanimity sufficiently it passed a resolution declaring that Murray, "having in a most insolent, audacious manner, at the Bar of this House, absolutely refused to be upon his knees as required



TITUS OATES.

A portrait of the perjuror attired in clerical garb.

by the said resolution, is guilty of a high and most dangerous contempt of the authority and privileges of this House." Supplementing this lofty condemnation were a series of resolutions decreeing that Murray should be committed a close prisoner to Newgate, that while there he should not be allowed the use of pen, ink, or paper, and that no person should be permitted to have access to him without the leave of the House. Finally, a Committee was appointed "to consider and report to the House what methods may be proper to be taken by the House in relation to the said contempt." Four days after this bolt was delivered—on February 8th, 1750—it was reported to the House by the keeper of Newgate that the prisoner was ill and desired that a physician and an apothecary might be allowed to resort to him. The permission was granted, and on April 2nd the physician appeared at the Bar of the House to say that he apprehended Mr. Murray to have the small distemper coming upon him, and that he left him so extremely ill, that if he were not immediately removed from his present place of confinement, there would be no possibility of saving him. Even this alarming report did not secure the unfortunate prisoner's release. The House merely gave orders for his transfer from Newgate to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, specifying that the conditions of his detention should continue as heretofore. Mr. Murray was not at all grateful for this half-hearted concession. When the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms went to him to arrange for his removal, he declined to leave, and commented strongly on the action of his friends, who had appealed to the House without his knowledge. As a consequence of his attitude the order for removal was revoked, and the prisoner was allowed to remain in Newgate until the end of the session, when the power of the House over him lapsed. In the next session the orders with reference to the prisoner were revived, and a fresh decree for his committal was made. But when the Deputy Sergeant went to make the arrest, it was found that the bird had flown. The implacable Commons passed a resolution for an address to the King to issue a proclamation for the apprehension of Murray, with the promise of a reward for the same. This final ebullition was, however, a mere flash in the pan. Murray went scot free, and never afterwards was the Parliamentary *how tow* enforced.

Either in the character of culprits or suppliants many well-known historical figures have been seen at the Bar of the House. Pride stood there for a space to answer for his delinquencies in the Cromwellian period; and on March 5th, 1667-8, Pepys made a memorable appearance there to defend himself and his brother officials of the Navy Office from charges brought against them in connection with the humiliating raid of the Dutch fleet under De Ruyter up the Medway in the previous year. On the whole, perhaps, this was the most picturesque incident in the life of the diarist, as it is certainly not the least attractive chapter in the annals of the House of Commons' disciplinary proceedings. In his diary Pepys gives us, as might be expected, a most minute account of the whole business. First we have a picture of him on March 4th preparing for the ordeal, anxious and sleepless and sick at heart. On the great morning we



COLONEL WARDLE.

A prominent military member of the early part of the nineteenth century. He moved the resolution condemnatory of the Duke of York in the celebrated debate of February 1st, 1869.

find him at the "Dog" at Westminster, fortifying himself with a half-pint of mulled sack, and thence proceeding to Westminster Hall, where, dropping in at another house of call, he quaffed "a dram of brandy." This preliminary preparation appears to have been beneficial, for Pepys tells us that with the warmth of the drink "I did find myself in better order as to courage truly."

Proceeding to the Lobby, Pepys and his party awaited the summons of the House. It came between eleven and twelve o'clock. Marching in with the mace before them, they took their stand at the Bar, facing "a mighty full House." Looking around, the diarist noted the air of eager expectancy that prevailed. He also with misgiving perceived that there was a strong current of prejudice against him and his brother officials. But he put a bold face on things. Here is his account of what passed: "After the Speaker had told us the dissatisfaction of the House, and read the report of the Committee, I began our defence most acceptably and smoothly, and continued at it without any hesitation or loose, but with full scope and all my reason free about me as if it had been at my own table, from that time till past three in the afternoon; and so ended without any interruption from the Speaker; but we withdrew. And then all my fellow officers and all the world that was within hearing did congratulate me and cry up my speech as the best thing they ever heard. . . . We were called in again by and by to answer only one question, touching our paying tickets to ticket-mongers; and so out; and we were in hopes to have had a vote this day in our favour, and so the generality of the House was. But my speech being so long many had gone out to dinner and come in again half drunk; and then there was two or three that are professed enemies to us and every one else. . . . I say these did rise up and speak against the coming to a vote now. . . . However, it is plain we have got great ground, and everybody says I have got the most honour that any could have had opportunity of getting; and so with our hearts all overjoyed at this, we all to dinner at Lord Brouncker's."

The next day Pepys tasted to the full the sweets of his success: "Up betimes and with Sir D. Gawden to Sir W. Coventry's chamber, where the first words he said to me were: 'Good



From a contemporary caricature.

MRS. CLARKE AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A drawing in which the artist has freely treated a sensational episode which occurred in the House of Commons on February 1st, 1869.



MRS. CLARKE.

The mistress of the Duke of York, who was summoned to the Bar of the House of Commons in 1669 in connection with the corrupt sale of commissions in the army.

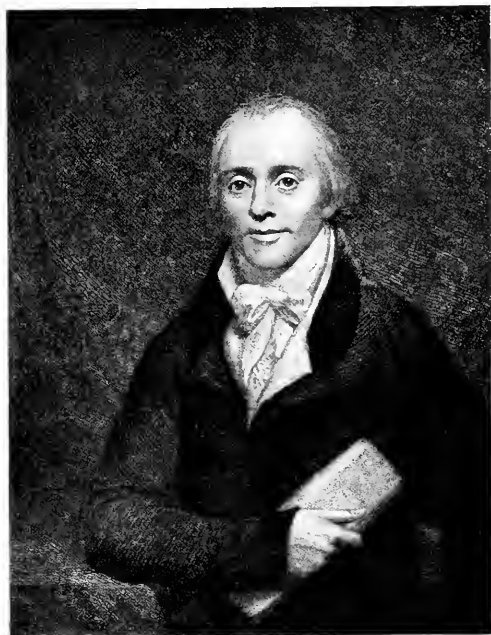
evaporated, and he was able to accomplish little beyond furnishing a subject for the religious bigotry of the time, his house being searched on suspicion that he had a crucifix and other Popish emblems concealed there.

In the same year that Pepys made his interesting *début* in the House of Commons that astounding impostor, Titus Oates, faced the Commons with a brazen-faced impudence thoroughly characteristic of the man. The prince of perjurers was summoned before the House on October 21st, 1678, to make good his charges against "the Popish recusants." His levity under examination was such that the Speaker several times rebuked him, and he was only silenced by a stern intimation that he came there not to expostulate, but to obey the orders of the House. Unfortunately his words were accorded a greater weight than from this episode might have been anticipated. Directly arising out of his examination was the well-known resolution of October 31st, 1678, affirming "that there is and hath been a damnable and hellish plot contrived and carried on by Popish recusants for assassinating and murdering the King, for subverting the Government, and rooting out and destroying the Protestant religion." Oates, emboldened by the success of his perjury, afterwards put in a bill for £678 12s. 6d. for expenses incurred "in bringing the truth to light." Such was his influence at the time, that the charges were paid without a murmur, despite the fact that he was already in receipt of a weekly salary. It is not necessary to follow his infamous career further, for Parliament was not again concerned with his affairs—at least directly.

As is to be gathered from this incident, the "call to the Bar" was made for purposes of inquiry as well as for disciplinary reasons. Nowadays the functions exercised in Oates's case

morrow, Mr. Pepys, that must be Speaker of the Parliament House,' and did protest that I had got honour for ever in Parliament." Later the same day Pepys, walking in St. James's Park, met the King, who congratulated him on his success. Subsequently, on looking in at Westminster Hall, he met "Mr. G. Montagu, who came to me and kissed me and told me that he had often heretofore kissed my hands, but now he would kiss my lips, protesting that I was another Cicero, and said that the world said the same of me." In short, Pepys awoke that March morning in 1667 and found himself famous. His triumph induced him to seriously think of seeking Parliamentary honours, and in 1669 he actually presented himself as a candidate for the representation of Aldborough, in Suffolk, but without success. His entrance into Parliament was delayed until 1673, when he was elected for Castle Rising, in Norfolk. By that time the fame of his oratorical achievement had

are delegated to Committees, who make a report to the House, but before the practice fell into desuetude, the House concerned itself directly with the investigation of not a few matters which in their day occupied a large space in the public mind. In this connection special reference may be made to the well-known case of Mrs. Clarke, the mistress of the Duke of York, who was required to give evidence at the Bar of the House in regard to the charges brought against the Duke in connection with the corrupt sale of commissions in the army, the disclosures regarding which had half-scandalised, half-amused, the country in the early nineteenth-century period in which the transactions occurred. Mrs. Clarke had shown by the audacity of her dealings that she was a woman not easily to be intimidated, and her conduct in St. Stephen's Chapel was quite in keeping with the reputation she had made for herself. Summoned before the House, she appeared at the Bar on February 1st, 1809, calm and self-possessed, and armed at all points for the ordeal she was to undergo. Her great charms were set off by an exquisite toilette. A lovely Thais, as one writer puts it, she dazzled the gravest.



THE RIGHT HON. SPENCER PERCEVAL.

The Minister who moved the resolution exculpating the Duke of York from the charge of personal corruption.

which was calculated to lead to her discomfiture resulted in a personal triumph. By her ready wit she turned the tables on her accusers, answering all questions in such a way as to cause annoyance. The Duke of York, who had aroused her ire by withdrawing his protection in consequence of the exposures, suffered especially at her hands. Whatever could be stated to his detriment was readily detailed. She showed a malicious joy in making things uncomfortable all round. Wilberforce in his diary gives an interesting sketch of the episode as it presented itself to his somewhat austere mind. "This melancholy business," he writes, "will do irreparable mischief to public morals by accustoming the public to hear without emotion shameless violations of decency. The House examined Mrs. Clarke for two hours, cross-examining her in the Old Bailey way. She, elegantly dressed, consummately impudent, and very clever, got clearly the better of the tussle." At the close of the long examination a motion was proposed by Colonel Warille declaring that the Duke of York had been guilty of corrupt practices and connivance of such practices, and praying that he be dismissed from the command of the army. This drastic resolution found some favour, but the House as a whole was not disposed to accept so extreme a view of the transactions. It finally agreed to an amendment brought forward by Mr. Perceval absolving the Duke from personal corruption and from criminal connivance in the malpractices brought to light. The scandal was too gross for this exculpatory declaration to have full weight. With a discretion which he had not always shown, the Duke voluntarily resigned his command almost immediately. Mrs. Clarke retired into an unhonoured though affluent obscurity with a handsome provision for life.

Though the call to the Bar of the House has in the majority of cases reflected little

credit upon the person summoned, it has occasionally been made to assume the character of a distinguished honour. In 1689 Schomberg attended at the House to return thanks for the grant of a hundred thousand pounds which had been made to him in recognition of his services in Ireland. "A chair," says Macaulay, "was set for him within the Bar. He took his seat there with the mace at his right hand, rose, and in a few graceful words returned his thanks, and took his leave. The Speaker replied that the Commons could never forget the obligation under which they already lay to his Grace, that they saw him with pleasure at the head of an English army, that they felt entire confidence in his zeal and ability, and that at whatever distance he might be, he would always be in a peculiar manner an object of their care." The precedent set on this interesting occasion, Macaulay notes, was followed with the utmost minuteness a hundred and twenty-five years later on an occasion more interesting still. "Exactly on the same spot on which in July, 1689, Schomberg had acknowledged the liberality of the nation, a chair was set, in July, 1814, for a still more illustrious warrior who came to return thanks for a still more splendid mark of public gratitude." The reference, of course is to Wellington, who attended at the House of Commons to receive the thanks of a grateful Senate, and to hear the announcement of the money vote made to him for his services in the Peninsular campaign.

A few months after Mrs. Clarke made her sensational appearance at the Bar of the House of Commons, an additional chapter of a not less exciting character was added to the records of the House. On February 10th, 1810, a Mr. Gale Jones, the manager of a Covent Garden

debating society, issued a pamphlet stating that the action of a member of the House in spying strangers, and having the galleries cleared during a debate, was "an insidious and ill-timed attack upon the liberties of the Press, tending to aggravate the discontent of the people, and rendering their representatives objects of jealous suspicion." Gale Jones was quickly brought to the Bar, and, although he humbly acknowledged his fault, he was promptly committed to prison. Three weeks afterwards Sir Francis Burdett, member for Westminster, proposed that the culprit should be released; but an overwhelming majority of the House decided against the motion. Sir Francis Burdett, irritated at his defeat, shortly afterwards commenced an attack upon the House of Commons by publishing a letter in *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* denying the power of the



SIR FRANCIS BURDETT.

The well-known member for Westminster, whose defiance of the House of Commons gave rise to intense popular excitement in 1810.





*Portrait of Warren Hastings by Sir Allan Ramsay, 1780.*

# THE RIGHT HON. WARREN HASTINGS





THE BAR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

It is at this spot that persons summoned to appear before the House of Commons are made to stand.

House to "imprison the people of England," and strongly insisting upon the importance of preserving the liberty of the subject. His conduct was then complained of by a brother member, the matter being brought before the Commons as a breach of privilege. Sir Francis Burdett, thus challenged, declared that "he had no intention of violating the privileges of the House of Commons, and not knowing that he had done so, he had only to say that he remained of the opinion which he had expressed in that publication.

Long and acrimonious debates took place, relieved at times by adjournments and divisions. In the course of discussion a military officer, a member of the House, called another "a brewer of bad porter," which caused a great commotion; but, as described by Lord Colchester,<sup>1</sup> then Speaker Abbot, "I saw Whitbread instantly took the thing with good-humour, and I refused to let anybody else speak till the uproar subsided. He then rose and said: 'Mr. Speaker, I rise as a tradesman to complain of the gallant officer for abusing the commodity which I sell,' etc., upon which the whole House burst into laughter and approbation of the self-command and good-humour with which Whitbread put an end to the fury of his friends." In the end, the House sitting until half-past seven in the morning, it was decided to commit Sir Francis Burdett to the Tower, and, as Lord Colchester noted, "the Sergeant with his deputy came home with me, and the warrants were written out and signed by me before nine o'clock." In the meantime, Sir Francis having left the House of Commons, the Sergeant-at-Arms an hour later repaired to Piccadilly, where Sir Francis Burdett lived, only to find that the member was "not at home." Sir Francis, however, wrote to the Speaker expressing his readiness to be there the following day at twelve o'clock. But the House would brook no delay, and the Sergeant was instructed to arrest the member at once, it having been provided that all the civil aid required could be obtained upon applying at

<sup>1</sup> Diary, vol. ii.

the Secretary of State's office, where magistrates were in waiting. These authorities, however, in view of the public excitement prevalent, decided that it was not possible to take the member that night, as they had not force enough to deal with the mob in Piccadilly, and as, moreover, it would be necessary to arrange with the Lord Mayor of London to convey the prisoner through the City.

The next day the Speaker received a letter from Sir Francis Burdett declaring that having been elected by the voters of the City of Westminster to maintain the laws and liberties of the land, "he would never betray his trust. The action of the House of Commons was illegal, and he would only submit to superior force." A messenger was sent with the warrant to deliver it into the hands of Sir Francis, and although he succeeded in placing it in the hand of the member, he was promptly turned out of the house. Such was the state of public feeling that Piccadilly was a centre of dangerous ferment; the Guards had to be called out, the Riot Act read, and the mob scattered. Sir Francis Burdett now wrote to the sheriffs of Middlesex, complaining that an attempt was being made to deprive him of his liberty, and asking protection from violence and oppression, his home being then beset by a military force. The sheriffs declining to be brought into the matter, events were allowed to take their course. Still the refractory member held the fort, and next day it is recorded that the Life Guards advanced through the Park and Stable Yard to Piccadilly, and that the Riot Act was again read.

Nor was the neighbourhood of the Houses of Parliament free from excitement. Indeed, so threatening was the state of affairs, that the Speaker ordered all the doors and passages of the House of Commons to be shut up, and also the grand passage from Westminster Hall to Old Palace Yard. River fencibles were moored on the Thames opposite the Speaker's garden; St. Mary's Volunteers were under arms in Westminster Hall, with patrols as far as Downing Street; George Street, Bridge Street, and Abingdon Street were also protected. At the House of Lords end of the Palace suddenly an alarm of fire was raised, a lighted basket of coal being discovered within the wooden fence of Parliament Place, near the house-keeper's apartments. Eventually superior force was provided by the Government, and thirty police officers, protected by the military, forced an entrance into Sir Francis Burdett's house, down the area, through the hall, where a party of Foot Guards remained. The officers passed into Sir Francis Burdett's drawing-room, where he was discovered with his family. The warrant of the Speaker was read by the

Sergeant-at-Arms, and the member for Westminster was forcibly removed to the carriage in waiting for him. This, with a powerful escort of Life Guards and dragoons, was driven through the principal streets to the City. On arriving at Tower Hill, the carriage was with difficulty forced through the assembled mob. At length, however, the palisade of the Tower was reached, and Sir Francis, with the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons, was received and conducted to the Governor's private apartments.

The Guards, on returning from the Tower, were severely pelted with stones, and they retaliated by firing upon their assailants. Great public excitement continued throughout London. The Westminster electors called a meeting in Palace Yard; but the gates were locked, and measures taken to secure the House of Commons from the invasion. Lord Cochrane and others persuaded the people to disperse, his lordship promising to present a petition complaining of the member's imprisonment, the corruption of the House of Commons, and praying



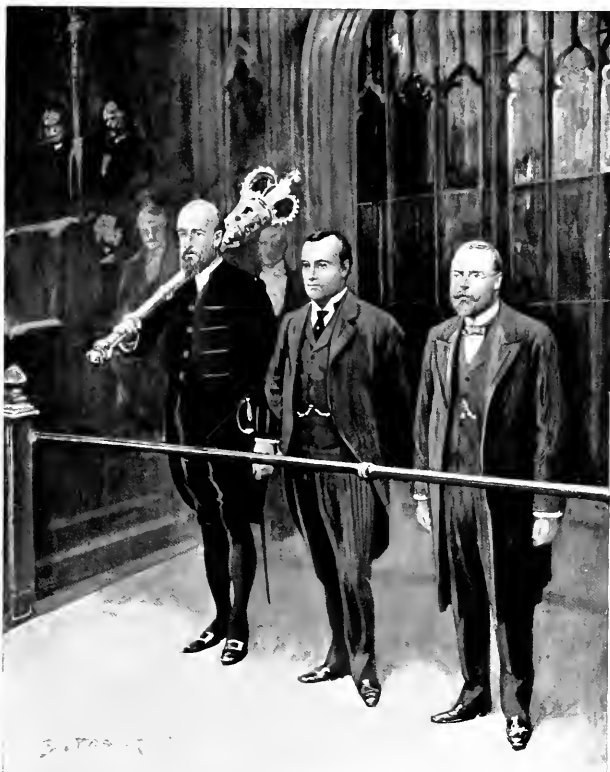
*Portrait of Sir Francis Burdett, Bart.*

CHARLES ABBOT, LORD COLCHESTER.

Who presided as Speaker over the stormy debates which terminated in Sir Francis Burdett's commitment to the Tower.

for reform of Parliament. This petition was rejected by the House on account of its being couched in disrespectful language; and in the meantime Sir Francis Burdett caused an action at law to be entered against the Speaker for the recovery of £30,000, and also one against the Sergeant-at-Arms for £20,000, on account of illegal warrant and arrest. At the prorogation of Parliament the liberation of the prisoner was the occasion of a great demonstration by his friends. Crowds of his supporters assembled to receive him on Tower Hill, only to be disappointed, as the member departed privately by water. The assemblage, not to be deprived of their demonstration, escorted the empty car provided to the residence of the member in Piccadilly, and so terminated a most exciting episode.

In recent times the history of this phase of Parliamentary life has furnished little that is of more than transient interest, excepting the Bradlaugh episode, to which we shall have occasion to refer in another chapter. An arrest of a member in the precincts of the House, the intimidation of a witness called before a Select Committee, the libelling of members by profane editors and printers—these are a sample of the matters which have engaged the serious, it may be said the solemn, notice of the House. Such incidents create great stir at the time they occur, for the House notoriously is never so genuinely interested as when it is engaged in threshing out some personal issue. But they are mostly mere trifles on the surface of Parliamentary life, leaving behind them only the faintest impression. The truth is that, though the disciplinary powers of the House are nominally as great as ever they were, they have lost much of their effectiveness by being shorn of the accessories which in old times gave them potency. Even the censure passed from the Chair, the invariable accompaniment of a proved infraction of the Parliamentary law, is not so awe-inspiring as it once was. It has sometimes been known to minister to a passion for notoriety rather than to inspire a sense of humiliation. Parliament, in truth, does not conspicuously shine when it dons the mantle of Justice.



*From a drawing by S. Paget.*

THE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER OF THE "GLOBE" (MR. GEORGE ELLIOT ARMSTRONG AND MR. WILLIAM THOMAS MADGE) AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON AUGUST 16TH, 1901.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### *THE HOUSE AT PRAYERS.*

THERE has never been a time in the long history of Parliament when the work of the Legislature was divorced from the practice of religious rites. The observances have varied in degree as well as in character—they have occasionally been degraded by association with political ends or motives; but the sacred duty has ever been recognised in some form or another. In the earliest legislative era the work of a Parliamentary session was preceded by mass, usually in the Chapel of St. Stephen. Later, when the two Houses separated, the custom was kept up, the practice in Tudor times being for the House of Lords to attend service in the Abbey and for the Commons to resort to St. Margaret's Church. Occasionally, it would seem from an incident recorded in 1426, the presence of legislators in a body at church was taken advantage of by ecclesiastics to read them a lesson upon the errors of their public ways. In that year the Archbishop of Canterbury, taking for his text "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's," delivered an impassioned harangue in favour of the repeal of the Statute of Premunire, by which foreigners



ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, WESTMINSTER.

The western front of the parish church of the House of Commons.

were disabled from holding any ecclesiastical dignity in this country. For the salvation of their souls and the good of the kingdom the listening legislators were implored to give the Pope satisfaction by withdrawing the obnoxious enactment. Such was the prelate's zeal and earnestness, that it is reported he shed tears copiously. But they were idle tears. With a full appreciation of the value of the law, Parliament elected to keep it on the Statute Book, where it remains to this day.

The Parliamentary attendances at mass were marked by much external pomp and ceremony. Of one celebration which ushered in the Parliament of 1540 we have a particularly vivid account preserved to us. A State procession organised on the most elaborate scale passed through the streets, the King being in the midst in all the panoply of regal state. In the train marched all the great officers of State, the Lords and Commons, the dignitaries of the law, and twenty abbots. The last-named were present by special command of the King, and the fact of their presence is noteworthy, as it was their final appearance upon the Parliamentary stage. Before the session thus ceremoniously entered upon closed, the legislative bolt had fallen which destroyed the abbeys and monasteries. On the approach of the Reformation the character of the sessional service changed. There was, however, a brief return to old ways in the reign of Mary, whose excessive zeal for the Roman Catholic ritual prompted her to organise, the day before the dissolution of the Parliament of 1554, a solemn "procession of both Houses to St. Paul's to give thanks to God for their conversion to the Catholic Church."

With Elizabeth's accession we enter upon a new phase of the subject. For the first time we read in the journals of devotions in the Legislative Chamber itself. We find mention of the Litany being said by the Clerk kneeling, and answered by the whole House on their knees. In 1571 Mr. Christopher Wray, the Speaker, proposed that the Litany should be said every day, and also a prayer by Mr. Speaker, "such as he should think fittest for the time." The Litany was most probably that of the second established Prayer Book, being the first book of Queen Elizabeth, or the first book of Edward VI., which (with changes) was subsequently adopted, and which remained in use until it was suppressed at the time of the Great Rebellion.



PORCH OF ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, WESTMINSTER,  
Erected in memory of Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke, by his widow.



J. W. del.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 1580.

to the House of the Holy Will and Will. And sith it hath pleased thee to govern this Realm by thy counsel and the three estates of the same: our humble prayer is, that thou wilt grant unto us, which is to counsel a free liberty to speak, and on all sides a ready and quiet assistance, so as we may the Laws and Statutes, as may declare us to be thy people, and this Realm to be peacefully ruled by thy good guiding and defense: so that we and our posterity may with good hearts wait for thy appearance in judgment, that art only able to present us to thyself. Hence God our heavenly Father: to whom with thee and our Holy Comforter, and the Holy Spirit, be all glory, now and ever. Amen."

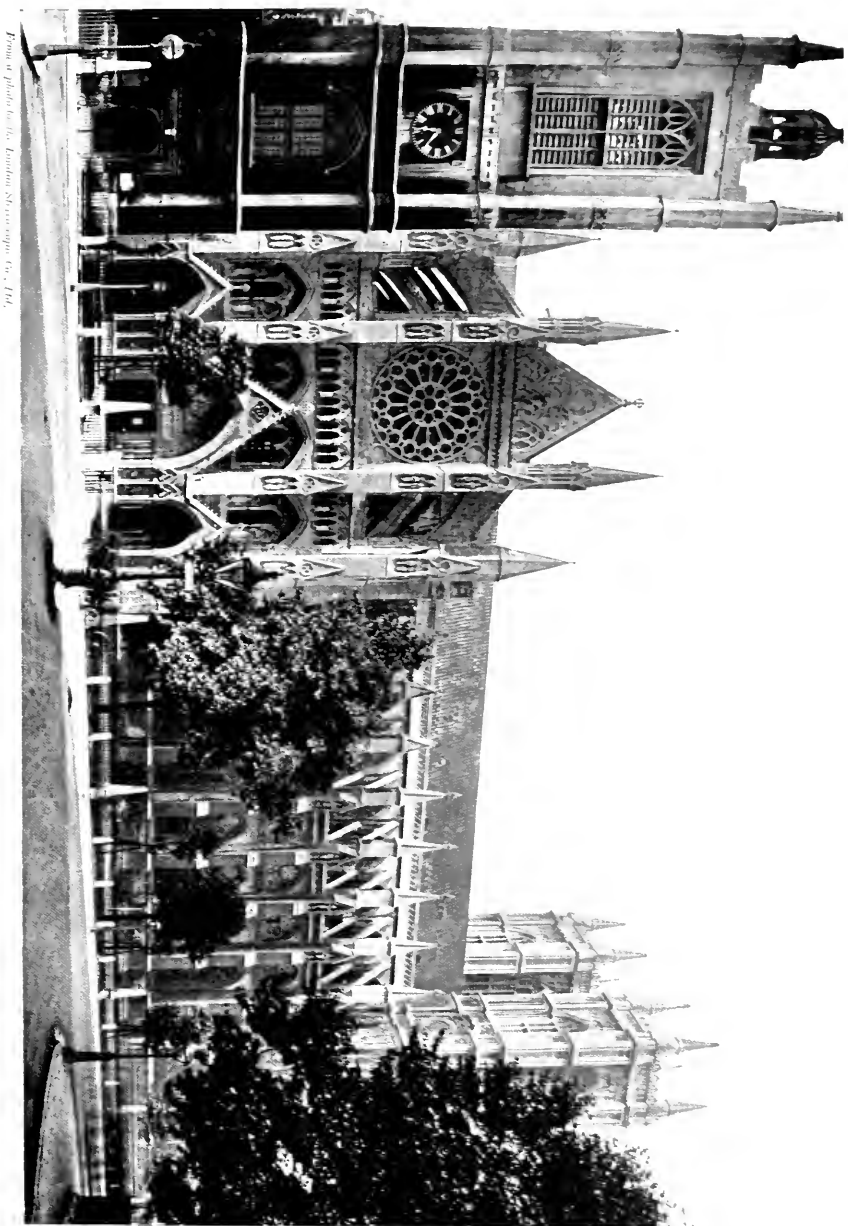
Although this prayer, said to be the recognised one, upon occasion a special appeal to the Almighty was made, as in 1586 when both Houses presented a joint petition to Queen Elizabeth, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. Her Majesty answered, and subsequently sent a message to the House of Commons. Both Houses resolved to abide by their petition, and upon Elizabeth's answer, which was answered the Chancellor of the Household, Sir Francis Knolles, took occasion to propose that earnest and devout prayer should be made to God to incline His Majesty's heart to the petition, and that some apt and special course of prayer might be devised, which might be used, and not only expended in the House every day, but also by all members elsewhere, and privately in their own houses.

During the later Protestant Parliaments it was the custom for the Speaker to compose a prayer to be read by him every morning during the session. The journals of the House commencing in the reign of Queen Elizabeth's reign; but Sir Spensers D'Ewes's journal of 1597 gives the Speaker's Special Yearely prayer:—

"O Right Honorable, Great, Heroic, and Fearful, the great and mighty Councillor, we, thy poor servants assembled before thee in this honorable senate, humbly acknowledge our great and manifold sins, and beseech thee, O Lord, to have mercy on us, and to direct us in all our ways."

In 1580, before the election of Mr. Speaker Popham, the House agreed to a motion for prayer, "that it might please God, both in that and in the residue of the proceedings of this House to direct them with His Holy Spirit," and a form of prayer was offered, which was read by the Clerk. In the same year Mr. Speaker coming to the House after eleven o'clock, is stated to have read the usual prayer, omitting the Litany for the shortness of time. The form of prayer used in Parliament only during Elizabeth's reign was as follows:—

"O Merciful God and Father, forasmuch as no counsel can stand, nor any can prosper, but such as are humbly gathered in thy Name, to feel the sweet taste of thy Holy Spirit, we gladly acknowledge that by thy favour standeth the peaceable protection of our Queen and Realm, and likewise this favourable liberty granted unto us at this time to make our meeting together, which thy beautiful goodness we most thankfully acknowledge, do withal earnestly pray thy divine Majesty so to incline our hearts, as our counsel may be subject in



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

# WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

The western front of the great minster in which formerly the Kings of England were crowned to their mass at the opening of a Parliamentary session.



SIR BENJAMIN RUDYERD.

A well-known member of Parliament of the reign of Charles I.

manifold sins and imperfections, and thereby our unworthiness to receive any grace and assistance from thee; yet, most merciful Father, since by thy providence we are called from all parts of the land to this famous Council of Parliament to advise of those things which concern thy glory, the good of thy Church, the prosperity of our Prince, and the weal of her people; we most entirely beseech thee that, pardoning all our sins in the blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, it would please thee, by the brightness of thy Spirit, to expel darkness and vanity from our minds and partiality from our speeches, and grant unto us such wisdom and integrity of heart as becometh the servants of Jesus Christ, the subjects of a gracious Prince, and members of this honourable House. Let not us, O Lord, who are met together for the public good of the whole land, be more careless and remiss than we use to be in our own private causes. Give grace, we beseech thee, that every one of us may labour to show a good conscience to thy Majesty, a good zeal to thy Word, and a loyal heart to our Prince and a Christian love to our country and commonwealth. O Lord, so unite and conjoin the hearts of her excellent Majesty and this whole assembly as they may be a threefold cord not easily broken; giving strength to such godly laws as be already enacted, that they may be better executed, and enacting such as are further requisite for the bridling of the wicked, and the encouragement unto the godly and well-affected subjects, that so thy great blessing may be continued towards us, and thy grievous judgment turned from us; and that only for Christ Jesus' sake, our most glorious and only Mediator and Advocate, to whom, with thy blessed Majesty and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and praise, power and dominion, from this time forth for evermore. Amen."

At the accession of James I. (1603), Parliament meeting on March 23rd, the business on the opening day was preceded by "prayers to God for good success"; and we further learn that "such prayers as had been ordinary in former Parliaments in the reign of the late Queen were placed in the front of the Book of Common Prayer." The reading was undertaken by the Clerk of the House, and a special prayer, fitly conceived for the time and purpose, was read by Mr. Speaker Edward Phillips, "which was voluntary and not of duty or necessity, though heretofore of late time the like hath been done by other Speakers." This Speaker's prayer was continued every day of the sitting. In 1606 the Gunpowder Plot was the occasion of the framing of a special prayer:—

"And forasmuch as all and every one of us have in this place, with wonder and astonishment and without any merit of ours, found a most evident assurance of thy mercie and goodness, in a miraculous deliverance from the greatest danger by Popish treacherie, that ever was attempted or threatened, towards our King, our State, and us; give us, good Lord, hearts above the hearts of men to offer unto thee in the same place a daily sacrifice of thanksgiving in the highest measure, together with a fervent and incessant zeal, care, and diligence in all our proceedings for the settling of peace and happy estate of thy Church among us; the preservation of our King, his Royal progenie, ourselves, and our posteritie; and for the preventing, suppressing, and small rooting out of the spring, issue, and fruit of all such hellish and Popish hearts, intentions, and practices, to the everlasting praise and glorie of thy blessed Name."

The prayer for the Speaker was proposed to be added, but apparently a difference of opinion existed as to its being read, for the journals of March 20th, 1606, record that "many of the House were assembled and the ordinary prayers said by the Clerk, but not the prayer wanted to be said by Mr. Speaker, being so directed by the assembly."



During Charles I.'s reign the religious observances of the House occupied much attention. A manuscript in the library of the late Sir R. Knyghtley, and printed by the Camden Society, gives a detailed and curious report of a debate which took place in 1625 on the question of the ordering of a public fast. First there was a proposal for a Communion from Sir Edward Giles. This was immediately followed by a motion from Sir Miles Fleetwood to petition the King "for a publick fast to our owne members." The Communion was ordered, and Mr. Hacket appointed preacher. Then "some question was made of the place. It was propounded by Sir J. Jephson, seconded by Mr. D. Norton, to be in our owne House"; but to this course strong objection was urged by Sir B. Rudyerd. "'I beseech you,' he said, 'not to refuse the church—remember it is God's house—lest we make this a coventicle which should be a Councell.' Soe it was agreed to be kept in St. Margaret's, Westminster." As to the fast, the King, agreeably to the request of the Commons, gave directions for one day weekly to be observed throughout the kingdom; "but for the Houses of Parliament hee left it to themselves when they would begin, and to make choice of their owne day." A conference between the two Houses was now held "to agree upon a time and place for the faste, and whether it bee together or asunder." In the result "the time propounded was Satterdaye; the place for them (the Lords) the Collegiate Church (Westminster Abbey); two bishops appointed to preach; three lords to observe such as were absent; the manner according to the King's directions in print; and a collection for the poore." The same day, adds the writer, "was appointed for ourselves; St. Margaret's, Westminster, the place; three preachers—Dr. Preston, Mr. Sute, and Mr. Oldsworth; and likewise a gatheringe for the poore." With three preachers to minister to their spiritual needs, the faithful Commons must have lacked nothing in the way of mental sustenance. But it was an age when long sermons and many of them were the rule—brevity



WESTMINSTER ABBEY AND ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH,  
As seen from the top of the Clock Tower of the Houses of Parliament.

in the preacher, indeed, would have been looked upon almost as an insult. Nor, it is to be feared, was the desire always for spiritual enlightenment in the pulpit discourses. Too often they were made vehicles for political propaganda; the service itself was not always entirely free from political significance. We read, for example, in a letter dated April 24th, 1640, from Sir Edward Harley to his wife, that the King attended the service at St. Margaret's Church which preceded the opening of the "Short Parliament," and that in response to the prayers "the people cried 'Amen' so loud that it made his head ache." Poor Charles! His head was soon to be free from such influences.

The political Parliamentary sermon was a marked feature of the Commonwealth. From the pulpit of St. Margaret's many fervent discourses were thundered forth by the "hot gospellers" of the period. The fashion did not entirely go out with the Commonwealth. On January 31st, 1688-9, Dr. Sharpe, preaching before the House of Commons at St. Margaret's according to their appointment, delivered what in the then circumstances was a very dubious discourse. His text was from Psalm li.—"Deliver me from blood-guiltiness"—and in the course of his remarks he used several expressions which were taken notice of, "as that king killing and king dethroning or depriving of kings were Popish doctrines." The reference was so clearly a reflection on the strong attitude assumed by the popular chamber towards James II, that the Commons decided to withhold the customary vote of thanks to the preacher. Nearly a century later, on Restoration Day (January 30th), 1772, history repeated itself. On that occasion the pulpit was occupied by Dr. Nowell, who appears to have given great umbrage by the tenor of his discourse. The circumstances arising out of the incident, as related by Gibbon in a letter written to Mr. Holroyd in February, 1772, are curious. "To-day," wrote the historian, "the House of Commons was employed in a very odd way. Tommy Townshend moved that the sermon of Dr. Nowell, who preached before the House on January 30th, should

be burnt by the common hangman, as containing arbitrary, Tory, high-flown doctrines. The House was nearly agreeing to this motion till they recollected that they had already thanked the preacher for his excellent discourse, and ordered it to be printed. Nowell's bookseller is much obliged to the Right Hon. Tommy Townshend." Gibbon is a little wrong in his facts. The journals show that the House ordered the thanks of Dr. Nowell to be expunged therefrom. An abortive attempt also seems to have been made in consequence of the incident to do away with the observance of Restoration Day altogether.

In tracing the career of the political sermon, we have digressed somewhat from the more immediate theme with which we have been dealing—the development of the devotional system in the House of Commons itself. Reverting to the reign of Charles I, it may be noted that while the Civil War was in progress in 1643 a covenant was



THE RIGHT HON. THOMAS TOWNSHEND, FOREIGN SECRETARY IN THE EARL OF SHELBOURNE'S ADMINISTRATION.

entered into and signed by most of the members not to lay down arms "so long as the Papists now in open war against the Parliament shall by force of arms be protected from the justice thereof," etc. Upon the discovery of the alleged "horrid Popish and traitorous plot for seizing the City, forcing the Parliament and joining with the armies raised by the King," the Commons ordered that some clause be inserted in the Speaker's prayer for giving thanks for this discovery and deliverance, and to beg grace of God to perform what they had undertaken by this covenant. And it was decided that a book be prepared and the vow and covenant entered therein, all members that entered into the covenant being required to subscribe their names.



INTERIOR OF ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, LOOKING WEST,  
Showing the "Rudeigh window" subscribed for by American citizens.

It is at this period that we first meet with the chaplain—a functionary who is now an important and indispensable member of the establishment of the House. The earliest record bearing on the point appears in the journals for 1643: "That one of the ministers of the assembly shall be appointed to pray with the House every morning." At the same time two members were chosen to move the assembly in the matter. A further stage was reached in 1650, when the House resolved: "The Governor of the College of Westminster do take care that some fit and able person or persons do attend *de die in diem* to pray in Parliament, and that they give their attendance accordingly." A few years later, during the Commonwealth, it was ordered "that the lecturers who preach the morning lecture in the Abbey at Westminster be desired to begin their sermon at seven of the clock and to end at eight of the clock; and then resort to the House to pray with them daily, before they enter into their daily work; and that Mr. Scobell, the Clerk of the House, do give notice to the ministers hereof." There does not appear to have been any stated fee or payment for the services



STATUE OF OLIVER CROMWELL OUTSIDE WESTMINSTER HALL.

From this side of the Hall may be seen one of the great buttresses of King Richard's time, and one of the flat Norman buttresses of the Rufus age.

rendered, but in 1659 the House bestowed the sum of £50 upon a minister for his great labour and pains in attending the House every morning since the first meeting of the Parliament and performing the duty of prayers. Other ministers were awarded the thanks of the House for prayers and preaching. A regular chaplain was first appointed at the Restoration, and the importance of recognising the office was given effect to by the House ordering members of his Majesty's Privy Council to attend the King and humbly recommend Mr. Edward Voyer, Master of Arts, for some signal mark of favour in regard to his constant and diligent attendance upon the House since the beginning of the Parliament as chaplain.

In the House of Lords prayers were formerly read by the Lord Keeper, then by ministers, and afterwards by the youngest bishop. Now the practice is for a selected bishop to officiate, according to arrangement. With the appointment of a regular chaplain in 1660, compulsory attendance of members at prayers was not insisted upon. Although no relaxing of the understood rules in the Commons took place, the House of Lords then decided that "no penalty, prejudice, or reflection shall be upon any that are not present at prayers."

and the Commons appear to have tacitly followed the example of the Lords. But before that period the Lower House from time to time made orders regarding the absentees from their daily devotions. In Elizabeth's reign it was decided "that every of this House that cometh after the prayer, which shall begin at eight of the clock, shall pay fourpence to the poor men's box." In Charles I.'s reign the penalty was increased to twelve pence, and upon one occasion in 1642 the money gathered of the members of the House coming too late for prayers was ordered to be given to Dr. Laiton to relieve him of his necessities.

The Commonwealth, in addition to appointing special ministers for prayers, fixed certain days for devotions. In 1653, July 11th was formally appointed "for seeking the Lord in a special manner for counsel and a blessing on the proceedings of Parliament," and the next day a Bible was ordered to be provided for the service of the House.

In 1660, upon Charles II. ascending the throne, a Committee was appointed to inform themselves what form of prayer had hitherto been used in the House, but no report was made by the Committee. But a similar inquiry was held in the House of Lords, and the prayers enlarged to pray for the Queen and the Duke of York and the rest of the Royal Family, and thanks were ordered to be given for the Restoration of the King and Parliament

to "the happy condition that now it is in." The revision of the present Prayer Book was finished on December 20th, 1661, and the Act of Uniformity, of which it was made a part, received the Royal assent on May 19th, 1662.

From this period to the present only casual references appear in the records of Parliament to the question of the devotions of the House. At times, however, allusions have been made to the prayers in the course of discussion on religious matters, as in the case of Sir Robert Peel in 1829 when introducing the Bill for the Relief of Roman Catholic Disabilities. "I rise, sir," said the eminent statesman on that occasion, "to discuss this great question in the spirit enjoined in one of those beautiful prayers by which on the present, as on every other occasion, the proceedings of this House are auspicated. In one of the solemn appeals to the Almighty source of all wisdom and goodness, we are taught to lay aside all personal interests and prejudices and partial affections in order that God may grant, in the simple and appropriate language of that prayer, the result of our counsels on this day may tend to the maintenance of true religion and of justice: to the safety, honour, and happiness of the kingdom; to the public welfare, peace, and tranquillity of the realm, and to the uniting and knitting together of the hearts of all classes of persons and all estates in the realm in true Christian charity."

The present form of prayer is marked by an impressive simplicity. It opens with Psalm lxvii.—"God be merciful unto us, and bless us," etc. Then follow the Lord's Prayer, prayers for the King and the Queen and the members of the Royal Family, and this special invocation to the Almighty on behalf of the members of the House of Commons:—

"Almighty God, by whom alone kings reign, and princes decree justice: and from whom alone cometh all counsel, wisdom, and understanding: we, thine unworthy servants, here gathered together in thy Name, do most humbly beseech thee to send down the Heavenly Wisdom from above, to direct and guide us in all our consultations: and grant that, we having thy fear always before our eyes, and laying aside all private interests, prejudices, and partial affections, the result of all our counsels may be to the glory of thy blessed Name, the maintenance of true religion and justice, the safety, honour, and happiness of the King, the publick welfare, peace, and tranquillity of the realm, and the uniting and knitting together of the hearts of all persons and estates within the same in true Christian love and charity one towards another, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen."

The present chaplain to the House of Commons, the Rev. Basil Wilberforce, D.D., is also Rector of St. John's, Westminster, and Archdeacon of Westminster. He is the youngest son of the late Bishop of Winchester and grandson of the celebrated William Wilberforce, M.P., who played so conspicuous and honourable a part in the movement for the abolition of the slave trade.



THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON WILBERFORCE, CHAPLAIN  
TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### *IN COMMITTEE.*

A STRANGER dropping by chance into Barry's vast building might find himself in an enormously long corridor on the first floor, out of which open a succession of ornate apartments, each equipped with a horseshoe table and a profusion of green leather-covered chairs. With somewhat nebulous views of the duties of a legislator, he would ask for information, and then possibly for the first time would learn that the debates in the House constitute only a part, and that not the most onerous part, of the transactions of Parliament. More detailed inquiry would bring him to the discovery that each working day in the Parliamentary session, excepting Friday, a group of members is engaged for several hours in each of these rooms, with the aid, in some instances, of an imposing array of counsel and Parliamentary agents, and witnesses drawn possibly from the remotest confines of the kingdom, in thrashing out with painful minuteness the details of some railway project or corporate improvement scheme, or it may be discussing the bearings of the latest economic movement affecting the body politic, or patiently investigating a grave public scandal. Thus informed, he would not unlikely arrive at the conclusion that here was centred the actual workroom of Parliament,



COMMITTEE-ROOM NO. 15,

Where the meetings of the Irish Parliamentary party were held to discuss the question of Mr. Parnell's leadership after the trial of the suit for divorce brought by Captain O'Shea.

And if he was so persuaded, he would not be far wrong. However unprofitable may be the discussions below stairs, here there is always real progress made; however meagre the sessional output as far as general legislation is concerned, here there is ever a rich harvest of achievement.

The Committee system of the House of Commons provides an interesting object of study, whether it is regarded from the historical or the constitutional standpoint. Seeing it as we do to-day, so vast and complex in its organisation, so powerful in its influence on the life of the country, it is difficult to imagine that there was ever a time when Parliament existed without its aid. Yet such is certainly the case. For a long time, probably for several centuries, the Legislature conducted its operations without the delegation of any portion of its duties. Probably the dawn of the system was the

establishment of the practice of going into Committee of the whole House when monetary matters were under discussion. This, however, was an adoption of the principle merely in name, for the House was constituted precisely as at other times, with the exception that the Speaker was replaced in the Chair by a private member. The arrangement was resorted to from motives of prudence. In ancient times the Speaker was more often than not a creature of the King, a functionary who played the part of the spy and the eavesdropper, rather than of the mouthpiece which he was properly considered to be. The "faithful Commons" were not so faithful that they wanted every word they uttered about the monarch's probably extortionate demands for subsidies carried forthwith to the Royal presence chamber, so they discreetly excluded the First Commoner before they approached their business. Gradually this practice crystallised into an established and cherished usage. Thus it happens that to this very day the Speaker has to be "got out of the Chair"—oftentimes a long and tedious process—before money matters can be dealt with.

Using the term "Committee" in its wider and more popular sense of a delegated body, there is reason to suppose that the system had its origin in the practice which grew up of the two Houses conferring together for specific purposes. A certain number of members from each met, usually in the old apartment of the Palace known as the Painted Chamber, and discussed points at issue between the two branches of the Legislature, or questions upon which it was desirable a common decision should be arrived at. It is not unlikely that some arrangement of the kind came into existence within a comparatively short time of the



FROM THE TAPESTRY THAT HUNG IN THE PAINTED CHAMBER.  
The scene represented is the siege of Troy.



TAPESTRY IN THE PAINTED CHAMBER.

These tapestries were set up in the reign of Charles II., and removed in 1890.

crown of the Realm of England." The custom, which seems at first to have been applied to high concerns of State only, was gradually extended so as to embrace matters which touched what may be termed the domestic life of the House. One notable Committee summoned in the reign of Mary, October 6th, 1553, had before it a question of considerable constitutional interest. It seems that a certain Dr. Nowell, a Prebendary of Westminster, having been returned as member for Looe, in Cornwall, it was debated whether as a clergyman he was entitled to sit in the House. A Committee was appointed to search for precedents, and it reported in due course against Dr. Nowell's claim, whereupon the House resolved that the doctor "being represented in the Convocation, he cannot be a member of this House." The worthy man was expelled accordingly, and the only satisfaction he had was in furnishing a most interesting leading case for future guidance.

When we reach the reign of Elizabeth, the traces of the existence of the Committee in the Parliamentary records are numerous. At the meeting of her first Parliament, on January 30th, 1559, a Committee of twenty-four members was appointed to treat of a subsidy. On October 30th, 1566, a Committee of both Houses was nominated to deal with the delicate question of the Queen's marriage. In 1571 as many as three Committees appear to have been created. Two were made up of members of the House of Commons, and the third was a body of "Privy

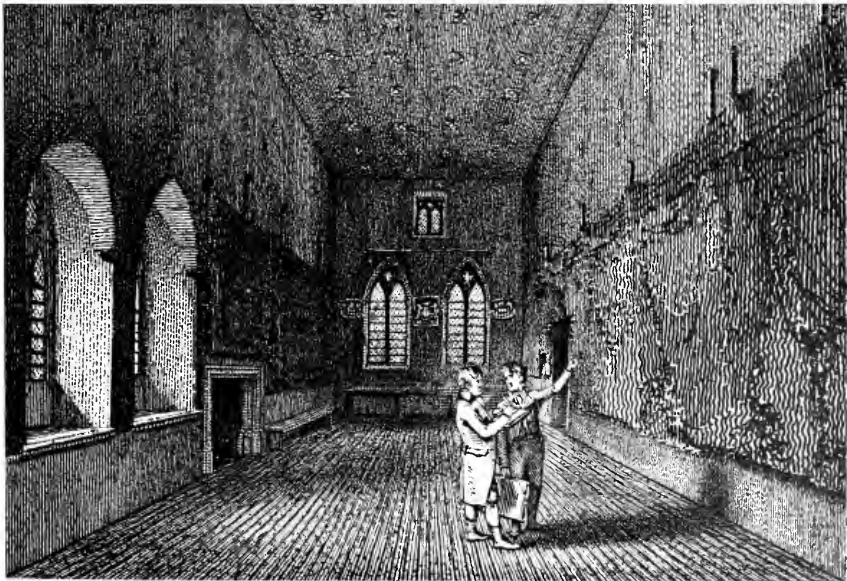
separation of the two Houses. But for its formal recognition we must come down as far as the beginning of the sixteenth century. About the earliest reference that can be found in the journals is under date May 5th, 1539, when it seems a Committee was appointed "to pluck up and extirpate the diversities concerning the Christian religion in the kingdom." Another record, dated February 5th, 1544, relates to the holding of a conference at eight o'clock a.m. between "a Committee of twelve Lords and as many Commons," summoned to consider the question of altering "the King's stile." On the day following the meeting a bill was sent up by which it was ordained that "the stile of King of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and of the Church of England, and also of Ireland, in earth the supreme Head," shall be united and annexed for ever unto the Imperial



Councillors with others." The last-named Committee was charged with the duty of examining into an allegation that some members "had received fees and rewards for their voices." It is satisfactory to know that it "could not learn of any member that had sold his voice in the House, or any way dealt unlawfully or indirectly in that behalf." The place of meeting of Committees at this period does not appear to have been fixed. The Star Chamber seems to have shared with the Painted Chamber the honour of accommodating the delegated bodies. On one occasion—in April, 1571—the Temple Church supplied a meeting-place. Later, in the stormy times of Charles I., Grocers' Hall, in the City, accommodated a historic Committee of the House.

A knotty point was submitted to a Committee which was summoned on March 23rd, 1607, in the reign of James I. It was instructed to search for precedents under the following circumstances, as recorded in the journals: "The Speaker is sick, and no provision has been made for choosing a Speaker from day to day. The King must give leave and approve after choice made." The Committee, after due deliberation and apparently fruitless investigation for precedents for dealing with so embarrassing a situation, came to the sensible conclusion that "if there be no precedent it is fit to make one." This solution of the difficulty was, however, avoided, for the Speaker having recovered from his indisposition, put in an appearance at the next sitting, and "it being Coronation Day, the members adjourn and attend church."

When we approach the troubled period of the Revolution, the Committee system is found to undergo a striking expansion. Matters of privilege constitute the main staple of the subjects relegated for inquiry. The many disputed points affecting the Royal prerogative came before select bodies of members for consideration, and out of the decisions come to by them some of the most momentous incidents of those stirring times directly arose. It should be noted, however, that the development of the Committee system was far from being exclusively political in its character. We read, under date March 20th, 1628, of the appointment of



AN INTERIOR VIEW, SHOWING THE ANCIENT TAPESTRY, OF THE PAINTED CHAMBER.

This sketch is of interest as a reproduction from one of the suppressed plates of Smith's "Antiquities of Westminster."

Committees for religion, courts of justice, grievances, and trade. There were standing Committees similar to the Grand Committees on Law and Trade which are part of the existing Parliamentary system. We have, in fact, a distinct foreshadowing of the great institution as we know it to-day. Apparently the rapid growth of the system was not altogether to the tastes of some members, for on June 11th, 1641, we have a record of the appointment of a Committee "for lessening Committees." This attempt to put the break on the Parliamentary machine does not appear to have been a brilliant success. As the years rolled by the activity of Committees became, if anything, more marked. When the struggle with the King reached the acute stage, the determination of many grave problems was submitted to chosen bodies of Parliamentarians. One Committee was appointed "to consider the sequestering and seizing the estates of all who are or shall be in war against the Parliament." Another body was selected (on February 9th, 1643) "to consider and bring in an enumeration of those more crying national sins for which the nation hath not as yet been humbled before God." The next day a Grand Committee was appointed "to consider the taking away the exercise of all arbitrary power in all places and preventing the exercise of the same for the future." In the time of the Commonwealth the controversies of the day are not less accurately reflected in the subjects dealt with. On March 19th, 1649, a Committee of "plundered ministers" met to deliberate upon a book, "The Agreement of the People called into Consideration by the Ministers of the Province of Lancaster." In 1652 a reference was made to a Committee "to consider what cathedrals are fit to stand

and what are to be pulled down." Then on November 25th, 1656, a Grand Committee sits on the bill "for uniting Ireland into one Commonwealth with England." Finally, on April 4th, 1657, we read of a report made from "the Committee appointed to attend his Highness, of his answer, 'That he was not able, according to his duty to God and to them, to undertake this charge under the title of King.'"

So the records proceed, contributing those abstract and brief chronicles of Parliamentary life from which the historian draws his facts, and the constitutionalist his information. Early in the eighteenth century we emerge quite into the light of the modern system with its appointment of Select Committees, charged with the functions of a semi-judicial inquiry. The great financial mania popularly known as the South Sea Bubble provided the occasion



DR. NOWELL, PREBENDARY OF WESTMINSTER AND DEAN OF ST. PAULS,  
Whose election for Looe, Cornwall, was annulled by order of the House of Commons in 1558.

for an inquiry at this early period which has left its mark on history. Sitting in 1721, the Committee went exhaustively into the whole of the incidents which accompanied this extraordinary movement, and finally presented a report which inculpated Sunderland, the Prime Minister, Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Craggs, and other prominent personages in the frauds that had undoubtedly been practised. Aislabie was expelled from the House and committed to the Tower for his share in the transactions. Sunderland was exonerated by his brother peers from personal corruption, but such was the feeling of the hour that he was compelled to resign office. More tragic was the fate of Craggs, who in a fit of desperation committed suicide. Another death traceable to the investigation was that of Lord Stanhope, the Secretary of State, who was so incensed at a charge of corruption brought against Ministers by the Duke of Wharton in the debate on the subject in the



JAMES, FIRST EARL STANHOPE,  
Secretary of State in the reign of George I.

House of Lords that he had a fit, from which he died the following day.

Another body, whose deliberations have been rendered historic by the great picture by Hogarth in the national collection, sat in 1728 to consider the state of the Fleet Prison and other gaols, the ghastly horrors of which had outraged the sentiment of even that callous age. The report of the Committee, laid before the House on March 20th the same year by General Oglethorpe, the chairman, disclosed an astounding state of affairs. It showed that the patent of the office of Warden of the Prison having been purchased early in the eighteenth century for £5,000 by Thomas Bambridge, that individual established for himself a little kingdom, in which he ruled with the iron hand of the despot. When it suited his purpose he aided and assisted prisoners to escape. To facilitate this end he "caused a private door to be made through the walls of the prison cut of the yard where the dogs are." He always kept the keys of this door himself, and it was proved that with his own hands he let out a notorious smuggler named Boyce, who was imprisoned for defrauding the revenue to the extent of upwards of £30,000. Not infrequently Bambridge declined to accept prisoners even when regularly committed by the courts of law. He preferred that they should be sent to an adjoining sponging-house belonging to himself, where they were subjected to systematised extortion. If their friends were wealthy, and were willing to pay liberally, the *détenus* had handsome rooms placed at their disposal, with every luxury. On the other hand, if they were poor and friendless, they were banished to garrets, where they slept three in one bed and were almost starved. The horrors of the sponging-house were such that prisoners were glad to purchase the "privilege" of being admitted to the prison if they could by any means



THE DUKE OF WHARTON.

A profligate nobleman who was a prominent figure in the House of Lords in the early part of the eighteenth century.

raise the money. If their *douceur* was not a liberal one, they were turned down to the common side, and even put into irons and incarcerated in loathsome dungeons.

Many instances were cited before the Committee of Barmbridge's cruelty. Captain John Mackphedris, a merchant and considerable trader in 1720, being bound for large sums to the Crown for a person, was afterwards ruined by the misfortunes of that year. He was committed to the Fleet; and having paid his commitment fees, furnished a room. Barmbridge demanded an extravagant price for the accommodation, which Captain Mackphedris refused to pay, offering the legal charge. Barmbridge locked the prisoner out of his room and forced him to lie in the open yard called "The Bare." Here the Captain built himself a hut to afford protection from the weather. At night the hut was pulled down, and Barmbridge, although the prisoner was unarmed, attacked him with his sword, and was only prevented from killing him by some of the other prisoners carrying him into a room. Next morning Bam-

bridge brought a detachment of soldiers and ordered the prisoner to be dragged out and put in great irons. These proved too small, so that in forcing them on the legs were nearly broken. The wretched prisoner lay without a bed, loaded with the irons, which were so close riveted that they kept him in continual torture, and eventually caused the legs to mortify. By some means the prisoner petitioned the judges, and Barmbridge was reprimanded; but he continued to keep his victim in irons until six guineas were paid him.

A systematic course of cruelty was also adopted by Barmbridge towards another victim, Captain Sinclair, who was confined in a loathsome place called the Strong Room, till he lost the use of his limbs and memory, and became a human wreck. Yet another case was that of Mr. John Holder, a Spanish merchant, who was a prisoner in the Fleet. This individual had a room which he fitted up with his own furniture, and he also had with him all his books, accounts, etc., to the value of about £30,000. Barmbridge took possession of the room and its contents, and turned Holder over to the common side. As a direct consequence of the cruel treatment to which the prisoner was subjected in his forcible removal, he lost his life.

The report of the Committee contained various recommendations for dealing with the infamous conduct of Barmbridge and his accomplices; and the House of Commons resolved unanimously that "Thomas Barmbridge, the Acting Warden of the Fleet Prison, wilfully permitted several debtors to the Crown in great sums of money to escape, and hath been guilty of the most notorious breaches of his trust, great extortions, and the highest crimes, and hath arbitrarily and unlawfully loaded with irons, put into dungeons, and oppressed prisoners under his charge, treating them in a most barbarous and cruel manner in high



*From the painting by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.*

**THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE.**  
A scene on Change Alley in 1720.

*Published by the Society of Artists.*

violation and contempt of the laws of this kingdom"; also "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty that he will be graciously pleased to direct his Attorney-General forthwith to prosecute in the most effectual manner the said Thomas Bambridge for his crimes." The House ordered Bambridge to be committed to Newgate, and the Speaker issued his warrant accordingly. A bill was brought in by General Oglethorpe, Mr. Earle, Lord Percival, and Mr. Hughes for disabling Bambridge from holding the office of Warden; and another bill was introduced by General Oglethorpe, Mr. Cornwall, Mr. Glanville, and Mr. Hughes for better regulating the prison, and preventing and punishing arbitrary and illegal practices of the Warden in future.

Monstrous as were the cruelties perpetrated by Bambridge in the Fleet Prison, they were surpassed in infamy by the practices of the gaolers of the Marshalsea Prison, into the conduct of which establishment the Committee also inquired. A personal examination of some of the prisoners revealed the existence of a system of torture of the most atrocious description. On one occasion, a prisoner having tried to escape, the ruthless tyrants, in order to extort a confession as to his accomplices, screwed certain instruments of iron upon his thumbs, so close that they forced the blood out of them. "After this," proceeds the report, "he was taken to a room, where, besides the other irons he had on, they fixed on his neck and hands an iron instrument called a collar, like a pair of tongs; and he being a large and lusty man, when they screwed the instrument close, his eyes were ready to start out of his head, the blood gushed out of his ears and nose, and he foamed at the mouth.

After these tortures, he was confined to a strong room for many days, with a very heavy pair of irons called sheers on his legs."

Another case was that of a prisoner, not having any friends to support him, who was almost starved to death. Upon attempts to escape he was taken by the keepers, dragged by the heels, barbarously beaten, and put into irons. Shortly afterwards, the gaolers, for their diversion, as they called it, fixed on his head an iron engine or instrument, which appeared to be an iron skull cap, and screwed it so close that the blood was forced out of his ears and nose; at the same time his thumbs were put into thumb-screws and screwed tight. The miserable man was eventually released and put into St. Thomas's Hospital, where he died.

Hogarth's moving picture, in its pathos and tragedy, perhaps the greatest that sublime master ever



*From an engraving by Kneller.*

CHARLES EARL OF SUNDERLAND.

The statesman who, as Prime Minister in the reign of George I., was implicated in the South Sea Bubble frauds.

painted, brings home to us as even this remarkable report of the Commons Committee cannot do, the horrors of the licensed infernos into which the prisoners of that age were shot. Amazing as it may seem to our modern understandings, the strong report of the Committee proved a harmless bolt. The arch-scoondrel Bambridge, after being detained in custody for a time on charges of murder, was, through some mysterious influence, released, and his companions in iniquity were equally fortunate in escaping the punishment they justly merited. Truly those were the dark days of prison administration.

Many Committees for special purposes were held at different periods during the eighteenth century. The matters with which they dealt were largely political, and the interest in them has evaporated with the lapse of time. But there were some exceptions to this rule. For example, a Committee which sat in 1788 and 1789 "to inspect the several houses and other buildings immediately adjoining to Westminster Hall and the two Houses of Parliament and the offices thereto belonging," dealt with the question of the arrangements of the old Houses of Parliament in such a fashion as to furnish many points of attraction for those who are interested in the life and history of St. Stephen's. One feature of the Committee work which may be particularly mentioned is the distinct foreshadowing of the disaster which ultimately destroyed the old Palace. So impressed were they with the danger of fire which reposed in the congeries of ramshackle buildings of which the Palace consisted, that they presented a special interim report urging the removal of all private residences from the precincts as an absolutely essential measure of precaution. When the time came for them to formulate their main report, they showed an equal degree of prescience in sketching the outlines of a suitable home for the Mother of Parliaments. "Your Committee cannot help thinking," they remarked, "that some great and noble plan ought to be adopted, conformable to which public buildings should be erected, not only substantial and convenient, but also of a magnificence suitable to the dignity of this country." At the instance of the Committee a body of eminent artists, including Adam, Dance, and Soane amongst others, was appointed to inspect the buildings and make a report upon them. The professional view when forthcoming was fully in harmony



THOMAS BAMBRIDGE,

The Governor of the Fleet Prison, whose diabolical cruelties perpetrated on prisoners were the subject of a Parliamentary inquiry.



GENERAL OGLETROPE,

Who presided over the Select Committee which sat to inquire into the state of the Fleet Prison.

of Westminster in ashes. As our readers will remember, it was a fire from a "neglected chimney" which set the old building in a blaze and ultimately encompassed its ruin.

Of a different type, and wider in its range of interest to this Committee, was a Parliamentary body which assembled in 1792 to inquire into the abuses attending the holding of State lotteries. The investigation was directed towards, not the direct evils of the lotteries, but against certain indirect evils which grew out of them. People, not content with the gamble with which the Government considerably provided them, embarked on a system of betting on the results of the drawings. These insurances, as they were called, attained to enormous proportions. Offices were established all over the country, and every town was overrun with touting agents whose business it was to introduce customers to their principals. The evidence recorded before the Committee gives a singular glimpse of life in that end-of-the-eighteenth-century period. According to an official witness, the insurance offices were "generally marked by a large number upon the windows, or a green curtain or blind," and were cased with oak plank plated with iron—presumably so as to be able to stand a siege. At the door commonly stood a man with an alarm bell, and when any person approached whom he had reason to suspect was inimical to the business, he rang the bell as a warning to the officials to escape, which they usually did by scaling a back wall or climbing to the roof. Occasionally a fierce bulldog was left in the office, to be released when the myrmidons of the law proved too pressing in their attentions. As a further safeguard the office-keepers never showed their faces to a customer. The applicant for an insurance presented himself at a little window in an oak partition and obtained his voucher from the man who was sitting concealed from view behind. Very large sums, amounting to several hundred pounds, were often paid as the price of insurance of a single ticket. The business, demoralising in itself, was rendered more obnoxious by the character of the agents. Many of these individuals of the poorer class were in the habit of taking the insurances they had collected to larger agents. From them they would ultimately receive the amounts to which the more fortunate insurers

with the sentiments of the Committee. They declared their astonishment at the buildings having so long escaped the danger of fire. They described them as "unprotected by walls of either brick or stone, connected and joined together by either boarded or lath-and-plastered partitions; with iron bars to defend the windows of the most consequential offices, which serve to attract the lightning,<sup>1</sup> to the destruction of their valuable contents; with funnels and chimneys running up in old, decayed piers in the very bosom of these combustible materials, in many of which fire from a neglected chimney might consume the whole; without the possibility of bringing sufficient water to extinguish the flames, such aid being hitherto overlooked or deemed unnecessary, and not more than one engine kept near the most essential offices in this kingdom." It is curious how exactly the architectural experts divined the source of the mischief which was ultimately to lay the Palace

<sup>1</sup> This reads curiously as a professional opinion in these days, but, of course, the properties of the lightning conductor were then little known.





THE GEARHS ESCORTING THE GOVERNMENT LOTTERY WHEEL FROM SOUTHERN HORSE TO COOPERS' HALL TO BE DRAWN.  
A reminiscence of the period when State lotteries were held in this country.

were entitled; but, instead of handing these sums over, the rascals disappeared with the money. It is clear from this that the "welsher" is not altogether a product of our modern civilisation. Indeed, there is a remarkable family resemblance between the problems which the investigating authority of 1798 was called upon to solve and those which only this session (1902) have occupied the attention of a Parliamentary Committee. The Lottery Committee, it may be noted, had little other result than the exposure of the mischievous influences of the clandestine lottery insurance office. It was not until State lotteries themselves were suppressed as a dangerous nuisance that the irregularities which formed the subject of the 1798 inquiry were finally swept away.

Long before the nineteenth century was entered upon the Parliamentary Committee system had settled into the groove in which it now works. For the most part the subjects dealt with were of a commonplace character, or touched matters in regard to which the interest was ephemeral. An exception is supplied by a Committee which sat in the year 1815 to consider what was described in the report as a matter of high importance as affecting the privileges of members, and one in regard to which they could find nothing in the journals to guide them, the case being entirely of a novel nature. The circumstances as set forth were peculiar. In June, 1814, Lord Cochrane had been indicted for conspiracy, and was sentenced by the Court of King's Bench to twelve months' imprisonment. In July, 1814, he was returned as a member of the House of Commons for Westminster, but remaining in prison until the following March, he made his escape and went to the House before prayers, and took his seat on the Privy Councillors' Bench on the right hand of the Chair. Soon after Lord Cochrane had entered the House the Marshal of the King's Bench appeared with two or three of his



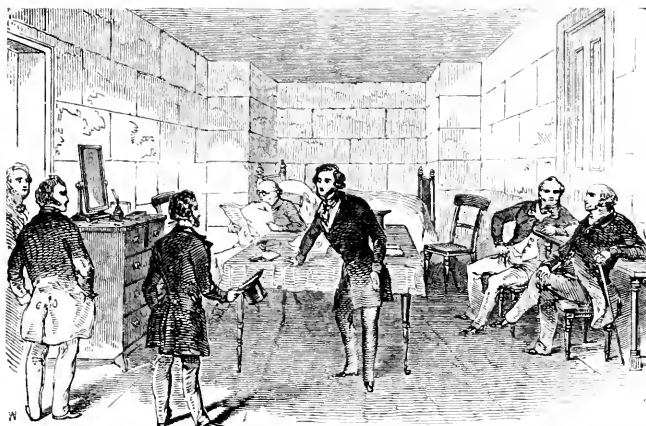
*From the possession of James Rossiter, by permission of Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd.*

LORD COCHRANE,

The celebrated sailor, whose action as one of the members for Westminster formed the subject of investigation by a Select Committee in 1815.

officers and other assistants, and carried his lordship away to prison, notwithstanding a remonstrance from him, that they had no right to lay their hands upon him there. The Committee, after considering all the circumstances, decided that the privileges of Parliament had not been violated so as to call for the interposition of the House by any proceedings against the Marshal of the King's Bench.

It is imperative on all members, excepting those in advanced years, to attend sittings of Committees when summoned. If they absent themselves deliberately, they make themselves liable to very serious consequences. It rarely happens, fortunately, that any coercion is needed to bring a legislator to a sense of duty. But there is one instance on record of a comparatively modern date which shows that the House is ready to apply the severest punitive measures on occasion. The case is that of Mr. Smith O'Brien, who came into violent collision with the House in May, 1846, for declining to serve on English Railway



MR. SMITH O'BRIEN, M.P., IN CUSTODY AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.  
The Anteroom.

Committees. When it was made perfectly clear that the refusal was deliberate and arose from political grounds connected with the member's desire to participate in the great agitation that was then in progress in Ireland over Peel's Coercion Bill, the House by vote gave Mr. O'Brien into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. By this functionary he was conducted to an improvised Parliamentary prison in Old Palace Yard.

Here, as he resolutely refused to purge his offence, he was incarcerated for some little time, receiving meanwhile the tribute of a fervent partisanship in the shape of complimentary resolutions passed by various public bodies and political organisations in Ireland.

At one time the practice of entrusting important inquiries to a Committee of the whole House was much favoured. For the nonce the House became a semi-judicial body, and heard counsel, examined the witnesses, and discharged all the usual functions of a court of law. Amongst examples cited by Sir Erskine May in his great work on Parliamentary practice are the inquiries in 1774 into the miscarriage of the Fleet before Toulon; in 1782 into the want of success of the naval forces during the American war; in 1809 into the conduct of the Duke of York; in 1810 into the failure of the expedition to the Scheldt; and in 1808 and 1812 into the operation of the Orders in Council. The custom which was first adopted in the case of Strafford's Attainder Bill was ultimately abandoned as too cumbrous. Now the Royal Commission, a body appointed by the Sovereign on the advice of his Ministers and holding its sittings apart from Parliament, takes the place of these Committees of



MR. SMITH O'BRIEN'S IMPRISONMENT.  
Passage to the Peers' Entrance.



*From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, Ltd. Street, W.*

THE RIGHT HON. CECIL J. RHODES.

The great South African statesman, who gave evidence before the South African Committee.

the whole House. Another old Parliamentary institution which fell into desuetude as the nineteenth century advanced was the system of Grand Committees, which, as already noted, was set on foot in 1628. In recent times, however, the old arrangement has been revived to a certain extent by the regular appointment every session of Grand Committees to deal with bills and matters affecting law and trade.

It is unnecessary to follow the Committee system in detail through the nineteenth century. Suffice it to say that the period witnessed an enormous growth of the number of bodies which were created every session to aid the work of the Legislature. The last great Parliamentary inquiry was that undertaken by the Select Committee which sat in 1896 and again in 1897 to investigate the circumstances of

the Jameson Raid and the complications which resulted from it in South Africa. Some of the most eminent members of the House assisted at the investigation, including Mr. Balfour, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Chamberlain, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Since Warren Hastings had been impeached in the adjacent Hall a century before, there had not been a keener or more widespread interest displayed in any Parliamentary investigation. The public excitement reached its culminating point when the late Mr. Cecil Rhodes came forward and submitted himself to examination on his personal share in the events which gave rise to the inquiry. For several days the world listened with curious interest while the South African statesman set forth in characteristic way his version of the causation of the Raid and of the incidents that had attended and followed it. At length, after sittings marked with many dramatic incidents and some curious personal episodes, the Committee delivered a report denouncing the Raid, and apportioning the blame amongst those guilty of its inception and execution. A storm of criticism was excited by the inquiry, and controversy still rages around certain aspects of it. Into these matters it is unnecessary to examine here. It must be left to history, with a fuller knowledge of the facts than the world at present possesses, to pronounce an impartial verdict upon the disputed points. Meanwhile, we may be content to take leave of the Parliamentary Committee system with this striking example, in which we see the power of investigation inherent in the legislative body in its most impressive form.



THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY.

A sitting of the famous Parliamentary tribunal which sat in 1896 and 1897 to investigate the Jameson Raid.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### LORD CHANCELLORS—FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS.

No record of the life of Parliament would be complete without an account of the Lord Chancellorship, and of some of the illustrious men who have filled that great office. The most historic and dignified position under the Crown, it has attracted to itself in the course of the eight centuries of its existence a mass of tradition which is closely interwoven with the constitutional development of the country. As in the case of the Speakership, the history of the office is stained with instances of personal corruption and petty meanness; but in times of stress and peril, as well as in days of peaceful political progress, the Lord Chancellor—or the Lord Keeper, as he was in earlier times styled—has ever been a splendid figure, wielding on occasions a power little inferior to that of the King himself.

The Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, Keeper of the Great Seal, is, by prescription, Prolocutor, or Speaker, of the House of Lords, although in the latter capacity his functions are somewhat of an anomalous and disconnected character. He is the highest civil subject in the realm, and upon State occasions takes precedence, after the Royal Family, of all his Majesty's subjects excepting the Archbishop of Canterbury, and to slay him is high treason. At the opening of Parliament by the King in person, the Lord Chancellor, kneeling upon one knee,

hands his Majesty the speech, and, if so desired by the Sovereign, it is his duty to read it to "My Lords and Gentlemen," after the Commons have been summoned to the Bar of the House of Lords. Occupying the oldest office in the Government, the English Chancellor soon after the Norman Conquest became a judicial officer of high rank and confidential adviser of the Sovereign in State affairs. At first he was styled the Chancellor of the King, and Blackstone states that "he became keeper of the King's conscience, visitor of all hospitals and colleges of the King's foundation, and patron of all Crown livings."

Though the office is now held by a lawyer of the highest distinction, the Lord Chancellor was originally an ecclesiastic, and the existence of the office in England, as in other States of Europe, may be ascribed to the influence the Roman Empire had on the constitution of modern nations. The last prelate to fill the office of Lord Chancellor and Keeper was John Williams, Archbishop of York from 1621 to 1625;



*Engraving from the Harleian MS.*

ARCHBISHOP WILLIAMS, LORD KEEPER FROM 1621 TO 1625.

The last prelate to occupy the woodcock.

but the ecclesiastical influence still pertains to the position to the extent of its occupant continuing to act as patron to a certain extent of Crown livings in the Church. Although holding three offices, it is as Lord Chancellor that the influence of the holder of the office is greatest and of most importance. He is President of the highest Court of Appeal in the land and of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice, a Privy Councillor, and holds an administrative office, taking part in the political policy of the Government of the day as a member of the Cabinet; yet when appointed to the woolsack he is not necessarily a peer of the realm, although the honour of being ennobled now invariably follows. Sir Robert Henley, who was appointed in 1757, was not created a peer until 1764, and a little more than a century later, Sir William Page Wood occupied the woolsack nearly a week before he was sworn as Baron Hatherley. With the office of Lord Chancellor is combined that of Lord Keeper; but there is now no essential difference between them, and few duties are performed by the latter; but the position confers all responsibility pertaining to it as custodian of the Great Seal. The seal is used for the kingdom of Great Britain and sometimes for Ireland, under the signed authority of the Sovereign. It legalises public documents of great importance, such as writs to summon Parliament, treaties with foreign countries, etc., and although the duties in connection with it are performed by the officers of the Keeper, he is responsible for its safe custody.



THOMAS À BECKET.

As Speaker of the House of Lords the Chancellor has an unimportant part to perform, his duties being almost exclusively confined to mere formal proceedings, and putting the question at the termination of a debate, whether the "Contents" or "Non-contents" have it. As a peer he has only the same rights as the other peers. He does not decide points of order, the House taking upon itself that duty; but he has the privilege of intervening in a debate. When he exercises this right, stepping aside from the woolsack, he severs himself temporarily from his office and takes his place in the House as a peer. He is not as Speaker addressed in debate; the peer speaking beginning his address with "My Lords." In a division the Lord Chancellor takes a part and votes first, and if the numbers are equal declares the "Non-contents" have it, no casting vote being exercised, as in the House of Commons. The salary settled by Act of Parliament for the combined offices is £10,000 per annum; and upon retirement a pension of £5,000 is enjoyed. The holder of the office must not be a Roman Catholic.

As has been noted, the Lord Chancellor—or Lord Keeper, as the occupant of the office was then styled—was in the earliest times invariably an ecclesiastic. Indeed, it was not until the period of the Reformation, when with the casting off of the dominion of Rome many old links were snapped, that the law took the place of the Church in supplying men to have the custody of the Great Seal, and perform the more difficult task of keeping the King's conscience. Running the eye over the list of past Lord Chancellors, we come across the names of most of the great religious dignitaries who have left their mark on mediæval English history. Roger of Salisbury, Thomas à Becket, Walter de Grey, Richard, Abbot of Evesham, William of Wykeham, Simon of Sudbury, and Cardinal Wolsey each in turn filled the office. Wolsey, the greatest of the race of ecclesiastical Chancellors, was also the last. His successor was the illustrious Sir Thomas More, a man whose bent of mind and personal habits were peculiarly those of the Churchman and of the scholar, but who, nevertheless, enjoys the distinction of being the first lay Lord Chancellor. Afterwards, for a brief period in the reigns of Edward VI. and of Mary, the old order was restored in the persons of Thomas Goodrich, Bishop of Ely; Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester; and Nicholas Heath, Archbishop of York. But



STEPHEN GARDINER, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

Bacon owed his advancement to high office primarily to his family connection with Elizabeth's great Minister, who secured him the appointment of Attorney to the Court of Wards in 1546, and so paved the way for his elevation to the greater dignity. But he was a man of marked ability, and had distinguished himself in the reign of Henry VIII. by forming a scheme for the creation of a university for statesmen in London out of funds placed at the disposal of the State by the Reformation. His conversation was salted with a ready wit which commended him to the favour of his Royal mistress, who above all things loved a joke—when not at her own expense. His later years were troubled with an exceeding corpulence of habit which rendered walking difficult. Contemporary writers show him panting and puffing as he walked to the woolsack in the House of Lords, and then, having seated himself and recovered his breath, giving three taps with his stick to signify that business might commence.

Lord Burghley's connection with the Lord Chancellorship constitutes one of the slenderest of the titles which he possesses to fame. It lasted only for a short time, in 1591, towards the close of his busy life, when, old and in failing health, he had neither the disposition nor the power to take any very active part in public affairs. It was a little after this period that he wrote to his son: "If I may not have leisure to ease my head, I shall shortly ease it in my grave;" and it was but a few months after handing over the Great Seal to Sir John Puckering, his successor, that his secretary drew this pathetic picture of his condition: "Methinks he is nothing frightened, but lying upon his couch he museth or slumbereth. And being a little before supper at the fire, I offered him some letters and other papers, and he was soon weary of them and told me he was unfit to hear suits."<sup>1</sup> The aged statesman, in fact, could not have been more than in a nominal and ornamental sense Lord Chancellor, because of the serious decay of his powers which is here indicated. Slight, however, as the association was, Lord Burghley's is a name which confers such lustre on the Lord Chancellorship that it must not be readily dispensed with.

The last of the eminent trio to whom we have referred was in some respects the greatest, in others, the least. In literature the name of Bacon has its place with that of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson amongst the greatest of early English writers; in the law it figures in an unenviable black list in company with others whose history we shall shortly have to recount.

with the accession of Elizabeth and the appointment of Sir Nicholas Bacon as Lord Keeper, the legal line was re-established, never again to be broken, excepting in the single instance, previously referred to, of John Williams, Archbishop of York, who held the Great Seal for four years from 1621, in the reign of James I.

The Elizabethan Lord Keepers and Lord Chancellors were perhaps the most illustrious of a great line. They comprise Sir Nicholas Bacon; William Cecil, Lord Burghley; and Sir Francis Bacon—a trio whose names are indelibly written in the annals of England. Their personal histories are intimately blended. Sir Nicholas Bacon was the father of Sir Francis Bacon, and he was the brother-in-law of William Cecil, with whom he in early life was a fellow-student at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Nicholas

<sup>1</sup> Historical Manuscripts; Hatfield Papers, Part IV. p. 4.



As in the case of other great men who have a dubious past, Bacon has not wanted apologists, and all that could be said for him has been well said; but, despite the whitewashing, the essential fact cannot be obscured that, partly on his own admission, he was found guilty of bribery and corruption as Lord Chancellor by a Committee of the House of Commons, and suffered accordingly. This unfortunate chapter in Bacon's life dates back to the year 1620, when he was at the zenith of his career. He had just published his great work, the "*Novum Organum*," and had thereby won for himself a European fame. In addition he had been created Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans with much Royal pomp—a mark of honour which, though, as Macaulay points out, posterity has resolutely declined to endorse, is yet indicative of the height to which the Chancellor had climbed. Fortune in every respect seemed to favour him, when suddenly out of a blue sky came a death-dealing bolt, in the shape of accusations of bribery preferred by a Select Committee which had been investigating the condition of the Courts of Justice. The indictment covered two specific cases. In the first a man named Aubrey was concerned. While waiting for the adjustment of a suit he had



From a drawing by Hollar.

YORK HOUSE.

This mansion was anciently the town inn or residence of the bishops of Norwich, and changed its name to York House in the reign of Queen Mary, when Archbishop Heath purchased it for the use of that see. In the reign of James I., being exchanged with the Crown, it was granted to George Villiers. The water-gate which appears in the picture is still to be seen in the Victoria Embankment Gardens, adjacent to the Charing Cross Station of the District Railway.

pending in Chancery, he was told by some of the hangers-on of the Court that a present to high quarters would facilitate matters. Taking the hint, Aubrey went to York House, where Bacon resided, and left a hundred guineas, which he had borrowed for the purpose from a usurer. The Chancellor took the money, and Aubrey went away in the expectation that all would go well with his business. In this, however, he was disappointed, for shortly afterwards an adverse decree was registered. The second case related to a similar transaction, only in this instance the *donneur* was £400. Evidence was at hand proving the charges up to the hilt. In the circumstances the House felt it had no alternative but to take proceedings for an impeachment. The King suggested the appointment of a special tribunal consisting of eighteen Commissioners drawn from the two Houses; but the Commons were not disposed to create such a precedent. On March 19th, the same day as the King's message was read, they called a conference with the Lords and delivered the heads of the impeachment. "At this conference," says Macaulay, "Bacon was not present. Overwhelmed with shame and remorse, and abandoned by all those in whom he had weakly put his trust, he had shut himself up in

his chamber from the eyes of men. The dejection of mind soon disordered his body. Buckingham, who visited him by the King's order, "found his lordship very sick and heavy." It appears from a pathetic letter which the unhappy man addressed to the Peers on the day of the conference that he neither expected nor wished to survive his disgrace. During several days he remained in his bed, refusing to see any human being. He passionately told his attendants to leave him, to forget him, never again to name his name, never to remember that there had been such a man in the world." In the meantime new charges of corruption were daily being brought to light, and an additional impetus was thereby being given to the preliminaries for the impeachment. An adjournment of Parliament by the King broke abruptly in upon the proceedings, but when the Houses reassembled upon April 17th they entered with redoubled vigour upon the task of investigation. Bacon, persuaded to that course by his friends, now sent to the Lords a qualified confession of his guilt: and, on this being returned as inadequate, he followed it up with a more explicit document, in the course of which he said: "Upon advised consideration of the charges, descending into my own conscience, and calling my memory to account so far as I am able, I do plainly and ingenuously confess that I am guilty of corruption, and do renounce all defence." Upon receipt of this the Lords sent a Committee to Bacon to inquire whether the confession was really his own. "My lords," said Bacon, "it is my act, my hand, my heart. I beseech your lordships to be merciful to a broken reed." There was nothing left now but to pass sentence. This was done the next day

in the absence of Bacon, who was too ill to attend. The erring Lord Chancellor was mulcted in a fine of £40,000, was ordered to be imprisoned in the Tower at the King's pleasure, was declared incapable of holding any office in the State or of sitting in Parliament, and, as a final touch, was banished from the Court. Prostrate with shame and broken in health, Bacon was conveyed to the Tower, to be released two days later by the King's orders. Subsequently the fine was remitted and the decrees of exclusion and banishment annulled; but Bacon spent the remainder of his years in retirement, supporting a somewhat troubled existence on a pension of £1,200 a year allowed him by the Government. He expired on Easter Day, 1626, at Highbury, from the results of a chill caught while travelling to London. In his will he left an appeal to the judgment of posterity at once pathetic and prophetic—"For my name and memory I leave it to men's charitable speeches, and to



LORD KEEPER COVENTRY,

Who, on the accession of Charles I., was entrusted with the Great Seal in succession to Williams, Bishop of Lincoln (afterwards Archbishop of York).



*Francis Bacon, painted by Sir Anthony Van Dyck, 1621.*

FRANCIS BACON, BARON VERULAM AND VISCOUNT ST. ALBANS.

The illustrious philosopher, essayist, and statesman. He was appointed Lord Keeper in 1617, and Lord Chancellor the following year. In 1621 he was dismissed from office for bribery and corruption.



JOHN FINCH, LORD FINCH OF FORDWICK,  
Lord Chancellor in the reign of Charles I.

foreign nations, and to the next age." The expectation of posthumous fame here indicated has been fulfilled to the letter. While the great man's errors are for the most part forgotten, his literary reputation rises steadily higher as one generation succeeds another.

When Bacon was evicted from office, his place was filled by John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, who, after holding the seals for four years, handed them over to Sir Thomas Coventry. This worthy was a lawyer of distinction who had filled the posts of Recorder of the City of London and of Solicitor-General. It was his lot to occupy the wool-sack during the stormy period of the constitutional struggle between Charles I. and his Parliaments. In the many controversies which arose at the time, he exercised a moderating influence. But he took a strong line against the encroachments of Buckingham, and might have gone farther in a popular direction had not death put a period to the favourite's ambitions. Sir Thomas Coventry (then Baron Coventry) himself did not live to see the tragic issue of the constitutional contest. He died at Durham

House, in the Strand, in 1640. Sir John Finch, Sir Edward Littleton, and Sir Richard Crane were his immediate successors, their united term of office extending over eight years.

During the Commonwealth the Great Seal was put in commission. When next the office was filled, it was with no less a personage than Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, the historian of the Civil War. It is a singular fact that this great man received his appointment three years before he was able to discharge the duties of the office. The circumstance arose through his fidelity to the Stuart cause. When, as far as the struggle with Charles I. was concerned, all was lost save honour, he fled to the Continent and remained in exile in Holland until the Restoration. In 1657, while he was at Bruges, Charles II., in anticipation of his early return, with the generosity which he always showed when the giving away did not cost him much, conferred the Lord Chancellorship upon Hyde. The compliment was probably the fruits of the intimate tie which bound the Lord Chancellor to the King by the marriage of his daughter, Anne, with the monarch's brother, the Duke of York. Whether so or not, it drew down upon Hyde a great amount of jealousy, and almost as soon as he had got into office prompted formidable intrigues against his authority. Matters came to a head in July, 1663, when the Earl of Bristol, the leader of the Roman Catholic party, brought forward a formal motion in the House of Lords for the Lord Chancellor's impeachment, on the ground that by slanderous reports as to the King's life and by proposals contrary to the interests of England, he was seeking to alienate from the Sovereign the affections of his people. After the articles of impeachment had been presented, the Duke of York, Clarendon's son-in-law, got up in his place and cut short the proceedings by intimating that it was the King's wish that the impeachment should not proceed.

An attempt was made to revive the proceedings in the ensuing session, but even less success attended it than the earlier venture. Clarendon's enemies, however, were not to be denied in this fashion. Reinforced by the powerful aid of Lady Castlemaine, the King's mistress, between whom and Hyde there was deadly enmity, and aided by the disastrous trend of events

connected with the Dutch raid under De Ruyter, the intriguers in June, 1667, secured the Lord Chancellor's dismissal, and the appointment in his stead of Sir Orlando Bridgeman. The stroke was followed in October of the same year, when Parliament re-assembled, by an impeachment of the disgraced Minister in regular form. A formidable list of charges was comprised in the articles of impeachment. Clarendon was accused of advising the King to disestablish Parliament, and to govern by a military power, to have caused divers of his Majesty's subjects to be imprisoned in remote garrisons to prevent them from securing the benefit of the law; to have corruptly sold offices; to have farmed the Customs at unduly low rates; to have advised and effected the sale of Dunkirk to the French King for no greater value than the ammunition, artillery, and stores were worth; and to have deluded and betrayed the King and nation in foreign treaties and negotiations relating to the late war, and to have betrayed his secret counsels to the King's enemies. Behind the indictment was a great force of public indignation aroused by the humiliating position to which the nation had been reduced by the gross mismanagement and culpable neglect of Ministers. Moreover, though the specific charges were in some instances exaggerated and distorted by partisanship, there was behind them a sufficient amount of justification in fact to give them on their own merits an effective force. Clarendon was not slow to see the peril of his position. Not desiring to figure as another Strafford in history, he, while the articles of impeachment were being debated, withdrew to the Continent, leaving behind an elaborate written defence of his conduct. His flight was interpreted unfavourably by his brother peers. They framed a bill for his banishment, which was accepted by the House of Commons, and eventually became law. This marked the end of Clarendon's political career. Accepting his exile with calm philosophy, strengthened probably by his earlier experiences of banishment, he devoted the six remaining years of his life to the production of his "History of the Grand Rebellion." His death occurring at Rouen in 1674, his body was brought to England and interred in Westminster Abbey.

Two years before Clarendon had passed away, another man, who has left behind him a great name in the history of the Stuart period, had ascended to the woolsack. This was Anthony Ashley Cooper, first Earl of Shaftesbury. Cooper owed his position to Charles II., whose favourable notice he had attracted as a member of the deputation of members of Parliament which went over to Holland to invite his return. But he was endowed with excellent parts,



*From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery by Sir Anthony van Dyck.*

EDWARD, BARON LITTLETON OF MOUNSLOW,  
Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in the Civil War period.

and stood in no need of Royal support to advance his claims. In the House of Commons he enjoyed for many years a great reputation as a speaker. Westminster Hall knew him as a brilliant lawyer. He was generally regarded as a man of great force of character and skill in public affairs. His tenure of the Lord Chancellorship justified these high opinions to the full. In those eventful closing days of Charles II.'s reign, when constitutional government was in greater danger than at any period since the days of Charles I., he took a bold stand on the popular side. The opportunity of showing his spirit occurred very soon after he had accepted the Great Seal. At the opening of the session of 1673 the question was raised as to the legality of the Declaration of Indulgence, extending toleration to Roman Catholics and Nonconformists, which the King on his own initiative had issued a short time previously. Charles, in his speech to the Houses, having declared his intention to adhere to the document, a debate arose in the House of Commons terminating in the adoption of an address to the King calling in question his action. Charles replied expressing regret that the House should question his ecclesiastical prerogatives, whereupon the Commons passed a second address, denying in plain and emphatic language the King's right to suspend any law. On receipt of the second address, Charles, in dudgeon, went to the House of Lords to complain of the addresses. At his instigation Lord Clifford, the Lord Treasurer and the head of the Cabinet, got up, and under cover of a resolution in favour of "establishing a perpetual fund in order to advance the prerogative and render Parliament inconsiderable," inveighed against the action of the Commons on the declaration, styling their vote *monstrum horrendum, nigens*. Shaftesbury had been given an opportunity of perusing the speech beforehand, on the assumption that he would support it with his voice and authority. Great was the consternation, therefore, when, instead of blessing the proposals, he delivered a strong argumentative speech in opposition to the views elucidated. He showed that Clifford's propositions "were extravagant, that what he aimed at would end in confusion, and the ruin of the Government, that it might perhaps send the Royal Family abroad again to spend their lives in exile without hope of return." "All which he spoke," adds the chronicler,<sup>1</sup> "with so much spirit and sharpness that he confounded the Court counsels." "What a rogue have you for a Lord Chancellor!" whispered the enragéd Duke of York to the King. "Od's fish!" retorted his Majesty, "what a fool have you for a Lord Treasurer!" The Lord Chancellor's speech clinched the matter. Charles discreetly withdrew his declaration.

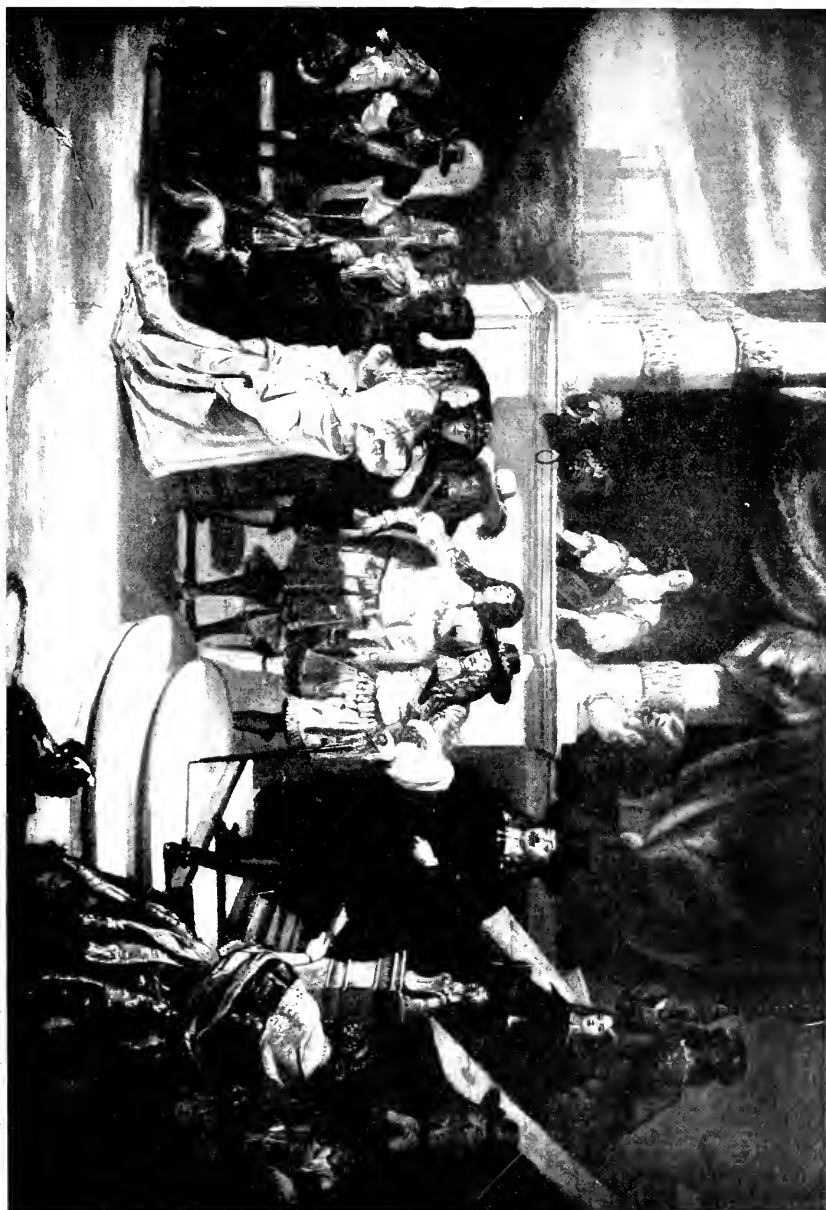


EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF CLARENDON.

The illustrious Lord Chancellor and historian. By the marriage of his daughter, Anne Hyde, with the Duke of York he became the grandfather of two Queens of England—Mary and Anne.

As may be gathered from the little colloquy related above, there was no love lost between Shaftesbury and the Duke of York. In truth, the Lord Chancellor was not at any pains to conciliate the Prince. His attitude is well illustrated by a little incident which occurred when he had to preside over the first sitting of the House of Lords. By custom the seat on the left of the throne was appropriated to the Duke of York, and that on the right to a prospective Prince of Wales. But the Queen having proved barren, the Duke crossed over and occupied the

<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Debates, 1668-1741.



THE DISCOVERY OF LORD CLARKE.

After his first interview with the King, Michael Popen, 1967.

chair on the right as the heir to the throne. Shaftesbury, seeing the position he was occupying, told him that his proper position was on the left. The Duke manifested an unwillingness to accept the hint, whereupon Shaftesbury said that he would not proceed with business until the House was in form. The Prince yielded to the inevitable, but as he passed the Lord Chancellor he exclaimed in passionate tones, "My lord, you are a rascal and a villain." Shaftesbury, with unmoved countenance, turned to him and observed with mock courtesy, "I am much obliged to your Royal Highness for not calling me likewise a coward and a papist."

Towards the King, Shaftesbury maintained, for a time at least, an attitude of loyal devotion. His speech at the opening of Parliament in the session of 1672-3 was couched in a strain of high-flown eulogy. "Let us," he said, "bless God that hath given this King signally the hearts of his people, and most particularly of this Parliament, who in affection and loyalty to their Prince have exceeded all their predecessors; a Parliament with whom the

King hath for many years lived with all the caresses of a happy marriage. Has the King had a concern, you have wedded it. Has his Majesty wanted supplies, you have readily, cheerfully, and fully provided for them. You have relied upon the wisdom and conduct of his Majesty in all his affairs, so that you have never attempted to exceed your bounds or to impose upon him. . . . And let me say that, though this marriage be according to Moses's law, where the husband can give a bill of divorce, put her away, and take another, yet I can assure you it is as impossible for the King to part with this Parliament as it is for you to depart from that loyalty, affection, and dutiful behaviour you have hitherto showed towards him."

Shaftesbury's smooth words were followed by action which showed that he was not content to fill the rôle of a courtier. As he had earlier in the year heartily supported the Test Act, which, by compelling all persons holding positions of profit under the Crown to receive the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, had forced the retirement of Clifford and the Duke of York with other members of the Roman



*From an engraving by R. White.*

SIR ORLANDO BRIDGEMAN.

The successor of Lord Clarendon in the Lord Chancellorship.

Catholic party, so now he leaned towards the side of those who, from a desire to maintain the Protestant succession, opposed the King's demand for fresh subsidies to conduct the war then being prosecuted against the Dutch. This ensured Shaftesbury's downfall. After Charles had prorogued Parliament in anger, he dismissed his Lord Chancellor, transferring the seals to Sir Heneage Finch. Later Shaftesbury threw himself with zeal into the cause of the popular party, and was foremost amongst those who were instrumental in bringing about the great constitutional changes which preceded and accompanied the Revolution of 1688. It is unnecessary to follow his career in detail, but one notable incident in which he figured after he resigned the seals may be mentioned as an indication of the influence he wielded at this critical period in English history. This was the delivery of a remarkable speech in a debate in the House of Lords in 1675 on a question of privilege arising out of the assertion by the Peers of a right to summon before them in a judicial proceeding a member of the House of Commons, and of the denial by the Commons of the existence of any power by which the Lords could receive appeals







*From a painting by George Perfect Harding.*

EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF CLARENDON.

The great Lord Chancellor of the reign of Charles II., and the author of "The History of the Rebellion." One of the most famous men of the Stuart period.

from a court of equity. Shaftesbury stood up boldly for the rights of the Upper House, claiming that aristocratic institutions were essential to the maintenance of popular government. From a defence of this principle he launched into an attack on the high-flown doctrines of regal infallibility then current. "This Landian doctrine (divine right)," he said, "is the root that produced the Bill of Test last session, and some very perplexed oaths that are of the same nature with that and yet imposed by several Acts of this Parliament. In a word, if this doctrine be true, our Magna Charta is of no use; our laws are but rules amongst ourselves during the King's pleasure. Monarchy, if of divine right, cannot be bounded or limited by human laws; nay, what is more, cannot bind itself; and all our claims of right by the law, or of constitutional government, all the jurisdiction and privilege of this House, all the rights and privileges of the House of Commons, all the properties and liberties of the people, are to give way not only to the interest, but the will and pleasure of the Crown." Further on in his speech Shaftesbury boldly proclaimed the right of resistance to arbitrary authority in terms which allowed of no misconception. A great sensation was produced by the language.

Not only did it, in the words of a contemporary writer, throw the House of Lords "into a flame," but it produced a marked impression on the outside public, whose minds were being excited to a dangerous pitch by the growing despotism of the Crown. Charles so little liked the speech that he prorogued Parliament to prevent further mischief.

Shaftesbury's subsequent political career was in strict keeping with the principles enunciated in his remarkable utterance in the House of Lords. He determinedly opposed the encroachments of the King, and as resolutely upheld the Protestant succession, which he looked upon as indispensable to peaceful constitutional government. After battling strenuously and brilliantly for the popular cause, he was overwhelmed by the reactionary influences which swept over the country after the sitting of Charles's third Parliament at Oxford in 1681. He was arrested on a



*From an engraving by R. White.*

ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER, FIRST EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.

The famous member of the Cabal Ministry in the reign of Charles II. He was Lord Chancellor from 1672 to 1675.



HENEAGE FINCH, LORD NOTTINGHAM,  
Lord Chancellor from 1675 to 1682.

Finch, Lord Nottingham. This able lawyer held office until 1682, when Francis North, afterwards Lord Guilford, was appointed the Law Courts, and his name stands high in the annals of the law. But he was in failing health when he won his promotion to the woolsack, and dying on September 5th, 1685, less than three years after his appointment, he has left but small mark on the history of the great office he filled. Not so his notorious successor, Jeffreys. On the great roll of Lord Keepers and Lord Chancellors there is no name which has been more execrated, or to which is attached more sinister memories. A blustering, hectoring judge, utterly devoid of scruple, and merciless as he was unfair, he was the chosen tool selected by James II. to wreak vengeance on the wretched victims of Monmouth's abortive rising. How he conducted the Bloody Assize in the West Country, mocking the unfortunate prisoners as he consigned them wholesale to the gallows, is a well-remembered dark page of English history. Unequivocal as is the distinction which this episode enjoys in the records of

charge of high treason, but the grand jury of Middlesex—men of his own way of political thinking—threw out the bill, and he was set at liberty. Dryden based upon the incident his satire of *Absalom and Achitophel*. In this Shaftesbury is described in these well-known lines:—

For close designs and crooked councils fit;  
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;  
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;  
In power unpleas'd; impatient of disgrace;  
A fiery soul, which worketh out its way,  
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,  
And o'er informed the tenement of clay.  
A daring pilot in extremity;  
Pleased with the danger when the waves ran high,  
He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,  
Would steer too nigh the sands to show his wit.

Dryden's mordant verse stimulated the Tory fervour against Shaftesbury. The machinations against him were prosecuted with redoubled vigour, until, alarmed for his safety, he fled to Holland, where death put an end to his career on January 22nd, 1683.

As has been noted, the seals were transferred from Shaftesbury to Heneage

Francis North, Lord Keeper. North had had a splendid career in



FRANCIS NORTH, LORD GUILFORD,  
Lord Keeper from 1682 to 1685.



*From the painting by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.*

JAMES II. IN HIS PALACE AT WHITEHALL.

According to the terms of the Treaty of Orange in 1688, James II. was deposed as a Catholic, and his daughter, Anne, was proclaimed Queen.

*Painted by J. M. W. Turner, R.A.*



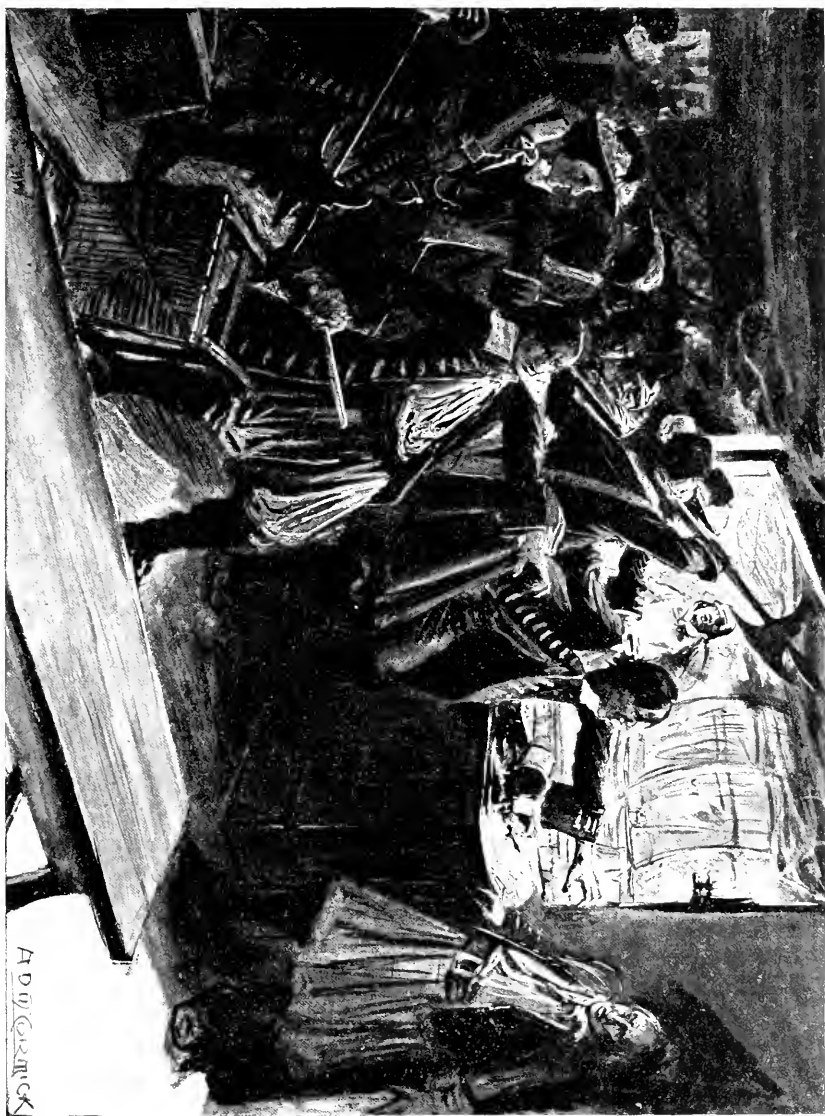
GEORGE, FIRST LORD JEFFREYS.

The notorious judge who filled the office of Lord Chancellor from 1685 to 1688.

assembled peers by the display, and before the sitting closed Jeffreys was compelled to tender an abject apology for his conduct. But he was too high in Royal favour for a temporary check like this to affect his position. Later months found him brutally active and aggressive in executing the despotic decrees of the King. He played a leading part in the historic expulsion of the Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, for declining to accept the King's Roman Catholic nominee to the presidency of the college. As head of the board of regulators created by the infatuated monarch to ensure the election of a Parliament which would bend to his will, he also assisted actively in the proceedings which led up to the issue of the second Declaration of Indulgence, and precipitated the final crisis. When at last the crash came, he was found sharing James's company at Whitehall, taking with him there the Great Seal. This emblem of office was surrendered to the King, and when the monarch made his pusillanimous flight on the night of December 11th he carried it off, dropping it into the Thames as he crossed to the Lambeth shore at the point where the Horseferry Bridge now stands. Meanwhile Jeffreys, with a vivid consciousness of the personal danger to himself that threatened in the changed conditions, donned the disguise of a sailor, and concealed himself on board a vessel at Wapping, with intent to put the Channel between him and his enemies at the earliest possible moment. All would probably have been well had not he in a rash moment ventured ashore to satisfy his craving for drink. While in the bar of the Red Cow Inn, near King Edward's Stairs, he was recognised by a scrivener who had suffered through a decision he had given in an action

injustice, it was this degrading work which was the direct cause of Jeffreys's elevation to the Lord Chancellorship. Returning from his circuit, his ruthless work accomplished, Jeffreys called at Windsor, where James, delighted at the thoroughness with which his wishes had been carried out ("taking into account his royal consideration, the many eminent and faithful services which the Chief Justice had rendered the Crown"), appointed him to the woolsack on September 28th, 1685.

The opening of Parliament on November 9th saw Jeffreys occupying the coveted seat of honour in the House of Lords. Good fortune seemed to bring out those insolent qualities in his nature which made his name a byword in the courts of justice. When, on November 18th, it was proposed by the Bishop of London to take the King's speech into consideration, he delivered a hectoring harangue in opposition, distributing personalities with a freedom which suggested that drink, to which he was prone, had loosened his tongue. For once, however, he had overshot the mark. A proper indignation was excited amongst the



ALTYRAN'S RETURN TO THE SHIP.

The picture is a reproduction of the painting by the artist, after the first with 'The Ship'.

ADAM'S RETURN TO THE SHIP.

brought in his Court. The man raised an outcry. In a trice an excited crowd gathered, and would have severely mauled the ex-Chancellor had not a body of train bands rescued him and taken him to the City. Jeffreys was conveyed by his captors before the Lord Mayor, and that worthy was so overcome by the unexpected sight of the once all-powerful Chancellor in the hands of men-of-arms, like any common malefactor, that he fell down in a swoon. Thereafter, at his own request, Jeffreys was taken to the Tower. There he remained until April 18th following, when, weighed down with anxiety and the effects of his intemperate living, he expired.

For four years from the death of Jeffreys the Great Seal remained in commission. When next an appointment was made, the choice fell upon John, Lord Somers. Amongst the political



*From a drawing by A. R. McClelland.*

**JAMES II. DROPPING THE GREAT SEAL INTO THE THAMES.**

One of the two occasions in history in which the Lord Chancellor's emblem of office was made away with.

figures at the end of the seventeenth century there is hardly one which is more attractive than "the gentle Somers." In an age when corruption was a venial failing in a public man he bore an unblemished reputation. He was something of a scholar, and in his younger days, before the law claimed his undivided allegiance, wrote some elegant verse, and was responsible for several spirited translations of the classics. As a lawyer he early achieved a great reputation. Only his youth prevented his being selected as the junior counsel for the defence at the trial of the seven bishops. Subsequently he was chosen by the Convention Parliament as one of the managers of the conference with the House of Lords on the question of the accession of William and Mary, and made a notable speech to the assembly. His rise to high official position was directly due to the skill he showed on that occasion. The King appointed him



almost immediately Solicitor-General, and in 1693 he was promoted to the post of Lord Keeper, the higher rank of Lord Chancellor being conferred on him two years later. A pleasing sketch of him at this period is given by a contemporary writer in a survey of the leading characters of the time. Somers, he said, "has gained such a reputation of honesty with the majority of the people of England that it may be said very few Ministers in any reign ever had so many friends in the House of Commons. He can go into the City and on his bare word gain so much credit of the public. He gives entertainments to foreign Ministers more like one always bred up in a Court than at a Bar. He is of grave deportment, easy and free in conversation, something of a libertine, of a middle stature, brown complexion."

Other writers of the period testify to Somers's singular charm of manner and the purity of his official methods. Unfortunately for himself, he was a little too much of the courtier, for an ill-advised compliance with a request made by the King for the affixing of the Great Seal to a blank treaty which he designed to conclude with France without the knowledge of Parliament led to his impeachment by the House of Commons after his dismissal from office by the King. Before the actual decision was come to, Somers appeared unexpectedly at the Bar of the House, and demanded, and was granted, a hearing. He defended himself with great eloquence and power; but the tide of partisan feeling set too strongly against him for his arguments to have any effect. His enemies, with intent to increase the prejudice against him, supplemented the charge of constitutional irregularity with a more dishonouring one of complicity in Captain Kidd's piracies, because the infamous buccaner had been entrusted with a command through the influence of Lord Somers and Lord Halifax. This accusation Somers repudiated with the mild remark: "As to Kidd's business, we hope there can be no blame, though perhaps we may appear somewhat ridiculous."

The Duke of Shrewsbury, to whom the statement was addressed, did not regard the paltry treatment of his friend so lightly. "I wonder," he said, "that a man can be found in England, who has bread, that will be concerned in public business. Had I a son, I would sooner breed him a cobbler than a courtier, and a hangman than a statesman."

The intrigue against Somers failed as it deserved. A quarrel with the House of Lords on some question of etiquette provided an opportunity for withdrawing from an untenable position, which the Commons were not slow to avail themselves of. In a simulated fit of anger they prohibited by resolution any member of their House from attending the trial and, naturally, as no one appeared to prosecute, the impeachment fell to the ground.



*From an engraving by Houtbraken, after the picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller.*

JOHN, LORD SOMERS.

The eminent lawyer and statesman. Lord Keeper and Lord Chancellor from 1693 to 1703.

Somers's subsequent career was one of high distinction. As the President of the Royal Society for several years, he identified himself with the cause of scientific research in a way which hardly any statesman has done since, with the sole exception, perhaps, of the late Premier, Lord Salisbury. In the domain of high politics he wielded a remarkable influence as the chosen counsellor of William III. In that *role* it fell to his lot to draft the last and the most remarkable speech which that monarch addressed to Parliament. It was delivered on the occasion of the dissolution of Parliament in 1701, when all England was aflame at the insolence of the French King in proclaiming as King of England the son of the then recently deceased James II. In the strong language put into his mouth by Somers, the King invoked the patriotic spirit of his people. "You have yet," he said, "an opportunity, by God's blessing, to secure to you and your posterity the quiet enjoyment of your religion and liberties, if you are not wanting to yourselves, but will exert the ancient vigour of the English nation; but I tell you plainly, my opinion is, if you do not lay hold on this occasion, you have no reason to hope for another." The Royal message struck deep down into the heart of the nation. It was circulated from hand to hand throughout the country, and copies of it were framed and preserved as precious relics of the King when death carried him off, as it did a few months later.

Somers's later career need not be traced, as it touches general political history rather than the special subject with which we are dealing. It is sufficient to say that when he died, in



Engraving after the painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

THOMAS PARKER, EARL OF MACCLESFIELD,

The corrupt Lord Chancellor. He was fined £20,000 in 1725 for bribery.

the summer of 1716, he left a name which is imperishably associated with the completion of the Union with Scotland and the settlement of the Protestant succession on an enduring basis.

One of the charges brought against Somers in his lifetime was being too fond of money. It seems to have been not without foundation. He accepted a gift of £30,000 from the King, and other substantial favours, which, with a due regard to right principle, he should have refused. But his offence, if offence it was, was cast quite into the shade by the actions of others who held the seals in the years following his tenure of office. His immediate successor, Sir Nathan Wright, is alleged by Sir Arthur Onslow to have received from Baron Bury a bribe of £1,000 for making him judge; and Thomas Parker, Earl of Macclesfield, who occupied the woolsack from 1718 to 1725, was adjudged guilty of wholesale

acts of corruption and degraded from office. The history of the latter disgraceful transactions supplies curious reading in these days, when we should as little think of questioning the immaculate purity of the judicial ermine as of doubting the whiteness of snow. Lord Macclesfield's guilt was brought to light through the influence of the financial crash which attended the bursting of the South Sea Bubble. One of the Masters in Chancery, Dornier by name, had brought ruin upon himself by wildly speculating in stock with the funds placed in his care. When his case came to be inquired into, some ugly transactions in which the Lord Chancellor was involved were brought to light; and such was the strength of the public indignation that Lord Macclesfield in the early part of the year 1724-5 deemed it advisable to resign the seals. A petition from the sufferers by the malversations of the peccant Master

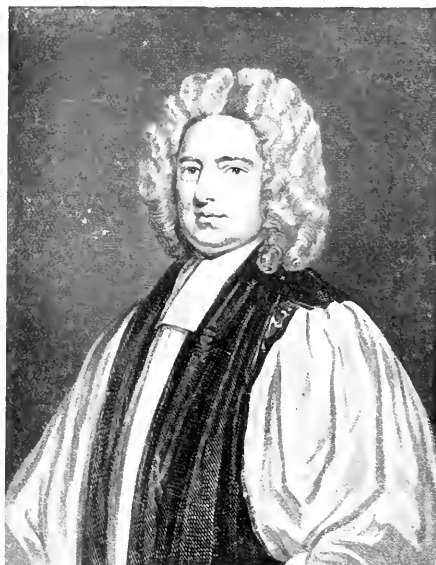


LORD HARCOURT,  
Lord Chancellor from 1710 to 1714.

of Chancery for a public inquiry led to the institution of regular proceedings for the impeachment of the ex-Lord Chancellor. The formal motion was made by Sir George Oxenden, an influential member of the House, on February 12th, in a speech in which he specified the offences of which Lord Macclesfield had been guilty as the misappropriation of Chancery funds and the corrupt acceptance of extortionate fees from Masters of Chancery for their appointments. Concluding his address, he spoke of the first magistrate in the kingdom having "fallen from the height of the dignities and honour to which he had been raised by the King's Royal bounty and favour to the depth of infamy and disgrace." The motion was carried by 273 votes to 164, despite the attempts of the Government to substitute for the impeachment an inquiry by a Select Committee. On the following day Sir George Oxenden appeared at the Bar of the House of Lords, and, backed by a great volume of public indignation, impeached the Lord Chancellor in due form. There were twenty-one separate counts in the indictment, each sufficient of itself, if substantiated, to ruin irretrievably the reputation of any public servant. In brief, the charges were that the Lord Chancellor had sold, for sums varying in amount from six thousand to eight hundred guineas, Masterships in Chancery; that he had admitted persons of "inconsiderable substance and credit" to those positions for the purpose of increasing his profits; and that to cover the scandals created by the improper use of his authority he had resorted to various artifices, including an elaborate system of fraudulent misrepresentation as to the ability and credit of the Masters. The accused's reply to the charges was in substance an allegation of custom. It was, he averred, in accordance with long usage that payments should be made for admissions to the office of Master—such payments being, in fact, "among the ancient and known perquisites of the Great Seal."

All the preliminaries over, the actual trial opened on May 6th with the customary formalities. Into the evidence adduced it is unnecessary to go in detail, but a few isolated passages may be cited to show the state of public morality in the highest official places at this period. One witness, a Mr. Thomas Bennet, spoke of his soliciting a post as Master in

Chancery, and being told that a present was expected. He consulted his friends learned in such matters, and offered a thousand guineas. "Upon this Mr. Cottingham (Lord Macclesfield's agent) shook his head and said: 'That won't do, Mr. Bennet; you must be better advised.' 'Why,' said I, 'won't that do? It is a noble present.' Says he: 'A great deal more has been given.' Says I: 'I am sure my brother did not give as much; nor Mr. Godfrey.' After further chaffing the price was fixed at fifteen hundred guineas, and after payment of the money the purchaser was sworn in Lord Macclesfield's bedchamber, whither the purchase price had previously been carried by his agent. Similar testimony was given by another witness. Hearing of a vacancy, he waited upon the Chancellor to solicit the appointment. He was told by that functionary that he had no manner of objection to him, as he had known him a considerable time. Finally, he was dismissed with the injunction to go home and consider the matter. This the applicant did, with this result. "I came again in a day or two,



*Engraving by J. Smith, after a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller.*

FRANCIS ATTERBURY, BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

and told him I had considered of it, and desired to know if his lordship would admit me, and I would make him a present of £4,000 or £5,000; I cannot say which of the two I said, but I believe it was £5,000. My lord said: 'Thee and I or you and I' my lord was pleased to treat me as a friend; 'must not make bargains.' He said that if I was desirous of having the office he would treat me in a different manner than any man living." Eventually the aspirant to office got into touch with the ubiquitous agent, and settled for the payment of five thousand guineas, because he was told "guineas are handomer." It was a strictly cash transaction. "I immediately went to my lord's; I was willing to get into the office as soon as I could. I did carry with me five thousand guineas in gold and bank notes. I had the money in my chambers, but could not tell how to carry it, it was a great burden and weight; but, recollecting that I had a basket in my chamber, I put the guineas into the basket and the notes with them; I went in a chair and took the basket with me in my chair. When I came to my lord's house I saw Mr. Cottingham there; and I gave him

the basket, and desired him to carry it up to my lord. I saw him go upstairs with the basket, and when he came down he intimated that he had delivered it." Subsequently, as the newly enrolled Master wanted the basket, he spoke to "my lord's gentleman," and it was returned to him. "Was there any money in it?" the examining counsel somewhat superfluously asked. "No, there was not," responded the witness.

An ingenious defence, based on the plea of usage, was made by the accused peer; but the offences were too gross to be palliated by any such line of reasoning. After a ten days' hearing, the Lords unanimously voted the accused guilty of the charges laid at his door. Lord Macclesfield, on appearing at the Bar and learning the decision, threw himself upon the compassionate consideration of his judges, urging as grounds for merciful treatment the cruel distemper which the fatigue and anxiety of the trial had brought upon him, the loss of his office, the public disgrace, and the fact that he had paid back a sum of £10,000

towards Dornier's deficiency. After this appeal he withdrew, and the Lords consulted as to the sentence. They decided eventually to fine the ex-Lord Chancellor £30,000. This sum Lord Macclesfield paid after he had been imprisoned a few weeks in the Tower. Public opinion upheld the justice of the punishment meted out to the accused. A common saying at the period was that Staffordshire had produced "three of the greatest rogues that ever existed—Jack Sheppard, Jonathan Wild, and Lord Macclesfield." The disgraced Lord Chancellor accepted his fate with philosophical calm. Retiring to his estate, he spent the remainder of his days in close seclusion.

Two other familiar names associated with the Lord Chancellorship in the early eighteenth-century period are those of Lord Harcourt and Earl Cowper. The careers of the two men, as Townsend in his "Memoirs of the House of Commons" points out, were singularly blended. "Descended alike from ancestors of rare antiquity, rivals in Westminster Hall, antagonists in St. Stephen's Chapel, the leading champions of their party, still more renowned in the Senate than the Forum, and devoted by their oratory to the height of legal ambition, they might be compared together, after the manner of Plutarch, though their political character affords rather a marked contrast than comparison. Unscrupulous as a public man, unprincipled, unstable, at the suggestion of self-interest versatile, a renegade on calculation, Lord Harcourt has left a name which it required a century of merit in his descendants to redeem from ignominy. The mild, disinterested course of Cowper, beginning with public virtue to the close, and never shadowed

once with even a fleeting suspicion that he acted from motives of sordid ambition or pelf, has shed a lustre on his name, which adds an adventitious grace to the spotless reputation of the pure-minded poet, the author of *The Task*." Earl Cowper, who was the first Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, distinguished himself by declining on his appointment the New Year gifts which former holders of the Great Seal had been in the habit of receiving from the officials and counsel practising in the Court of Chancery. This disinterested action on his part created a great prejudice against him amongst those who were in favour of upholding the old corrupt traditions; but the public rightly appraised the motives which dictated the renunciation, and to the end of his long career, which terminated with his resignation of the Great Seal at the conclusion of his second term of office in 1718, held him in high regard. Cowper was distinguished by a singular grace



SIR PETER KING,

The son of a grocer at Exeter, who, by dint of perseverance, worked his way up to the woolstack.

and charm of manner. His bearing in Court, whether towards counsel or witnesses, was marked by great dignity and courtesy. It is of him that the well-known story is told by Miss Hawkins in her "Memoirs" of how Richard Cromwell, then a very old man, being engaged in some litigation in the Lord Chancellor's Court, was invited to take a seat on the bench by the side of the judge—a graceful act, which drew from Bulstrode Whitelock, then at the Bar, the remark: "This day, so many years, I saw my father carry the Great Seal before that man." As an orator Earl Cowper was justly esteemed in his day. One specimen of his eloquence may be given to illustrate the purity of his style. It is the peroration of a celebrated speech he delivered in the House of Lords in 1723 on the bill of pains and penalties by which the Government of the day sought to punish Bishop Atterbury and his co-conspirators. "My lords," he said, "I have now done; and if upon this occasion I have tried your patience, or discovered a warmth unbecoming me, your lordships will impute it to the concern I am under, lest, if this bill should pass, it should become a dangerous precedent for after ages. My zeal as an Englishman for the good of my country obliges me to set my face against oppression in every shape; and wherever I think I meet with it matters not whether one man or five hundred be the oppressors, I shall be sure to oppose it with all my might. For vain will be the boast of the excellency of our Constitution, in vain shall we talk of our liberty and property, secured to us by laws, if a precedent shall be established to strip us of both, where both law and evidence are confessedly wanting. My lords, upon the whole matter I take this bill to be derogatory to the dignity of Parliament in general, to the dignity of this House in particular. I take the pains and penalties in it to

be much greater or much less than the Bishop deserves. I take every individual branch of the charge against him to be unsupported by any evidence whatsoever. I think there are no grounds for any private opinion of the Bishop's guilt, but what arises from private prejudice only. I think private prejudice has nothing to do with judicial proceedings. I am, therefore, for throwing out this bill." This manly protest against legal wrong-doing under cover of constitutional methods was almost the last public act of the ex-Lord Chancellor. Seized with illness, largely induced by his exertions in opposition to the Government policy, he retired to his house in Hertfordshire, and there expired on October 10th, 1723.

In remarkable contrast to the aristocratic and dignified Cowper was Peter King, who in 1725, on Lord Macclesfield's dismissal, was elevated to the woolsack. The career



*Engraving of the Hon. Charles*

CHARLES, LORD TALBOT,  
Lord Chancellor from 1733 to 1757.

of this great lawyer supplies one of the most curious chapters in the history of the Lord Chancellorship. Born the son of a grocer in Exeter, he spent his early years in his father's shop weighing out sugar and tea, and performing the other humble duties pertaining to a small business in a country town. Moved by a laudable ambition, and inspired by the example of Locke, the author of the "Essay on Human Understanding," who was a kinsman of his on the mother's side, he determined to educate himself. All his spare pocket-money went in the purchase of books. Every hour he could snatch from the irksome routine duties of the shop he devoted to study. The fruit of his application was forthcoming before he reached his twentieth year in the shape of an elaborate work on "The Constitution, Discipline, and Unity of the Primitive Church." Locke, to whom the treatise was submitted, was greatly struck with the erudition and ability displayed by the young writer, and pleaded

with his father to train him for the law, to which his bent of mind was well adapted. The worthy grocer yielded to the representations made to him. In due course the future Lord Chancellor was packed off to Leyden, there to lay the foundations of a knowledge of men and things which was destined to be of the utmost advantage to him ultimately. Returning to England, he was in 1700 elected member for Beer Alston in the House of Commons. Thenceforward his progress was rapid. Assisted by a considerable portion of Locke's estate, which the philosopher had bequeathed him on his death in 1704, he went from one success to another, until in 1715 he was appointed to the Chief Justiceship of the Common Pleas in succession to Lord Trevor. For ten years he filled this position with distinction, and then, on Lord Macclesfield's dismissal, he was elevated to the woolsack with the title of Lord King of Ockham, in the county of Surrey. As Lord Chancellor, Lord King was not a conspicuous success. The memory left of him is of a shrewd, avaricious lawyer who subordinated principle to personal aggrandisement. But whatever his moral shortcomings, his career will ever be cited as an example of what may be done by perseverance and steady application when allied with great intellectual powers.

Lord King retained the Great Seal until 1733, when he resigned it to Lord Talbot. On the death of that peer in the early part of 1737, the Lord Chancellorship devolved upon Baron Hardwicke, one of the greatest of the many great men whose names are associated with this splendid office. Campbell, in his "Lives of the Lord Chancellors," relates the curious circumstances under which the appointment was made. Though Hardwicke was marked out by his



PHILIP YORKE, FIRST EARL OF HARDWICKE,

One of the most famous of the Lord Chancellors. He held office for nearly twenty years—from 1737 to 1756.



ROBERT, LORD HENLEY,  
Lord Chancellor from 1757 to 1766.

commanding abilities for the woolstack, there was some difficulty as to the terms on which he was to be appointed, and for a whole week the Great Seal remained in the personal custody of the King. "Meanwhile, as Parliament was sitting, and there was no Lord Chancellor or Lord Keeper, it was necessary to provide a Speaker for the House of Lords, and the Great Seal, while in the King's possession, was (somewhat irregularly) put to a commission authorising Lord Hardwicke to act in that capacity. He accordingly did act for several days as Speaker without being Chancellor. During this interval it is related that Walpole, resisting some of Hardwicke's demands, said to him by way of threat, 'I must offer the seals to Fazakerly.' 'Fazakerly!' exclaimed Hardwicke, 'Impossible; he is certainly a Tory, perhaps a Jacobite!' 'It is all very true,' replied Sir Robert, taking out his watch; 'but if by one o'clock you do not accept my offer, Fazakerly by two becomes Lord Keeper, and one of the staunchest Whigs in all England.' The bargain was immediately closed, and Lord Hardwicke was

contented with the promise that the next tellership should be bestowed upon his son."

For twenty years the Earl of Hardwicke, as he now became, brilliantly occupied the woolstack. It is recorded of him that he never had a decision reversed, and that only three of his judgments were even appealed against. Lord Henley (Earl of Northampton) and Lord Camden, whose names are next met with in the annals of the Lord Chancellorship, and who between them held the Great Seal for thirteen years from 1757, were men of considerable ability, but their careers merely call for passing mention here. A more picturesque, if less attractive, figure than either is that of their successor on the woolstack, Lord Thurlow. About the memory of this eminent lawyer more good stories cluster than are associated with any other Lord Chancellor. It is a tribute, perhaps, to the force of his character that the anecdotalage is mostly of the uncomplimentary description. Truth to tell, he was not loved even by his political associates. His brusque, overbearing manners, his overweening sense of his own importance, and, above all, his affectation of omniscience, all tended to make him unpopular. Campbell says of him that, although pretending to despise the opinion of others, he was acting a part, and his aspect was more solemn and imposing than that of almost any other person in public life—so much so that Fox used to say, "It proved him dishonest, since no man could be so wise as Thurlow looked." His oratorical style was not brilliant, but he could on occasion reply with crushing effect to an opponent. One of the most remarkable speeches he delivered was his celebrated reply to the Duke of Grafton during the inquiry into Lord Sandwich's administration of Greenwich Hospital. The Duke had twitted Lord Thurlow with his plebeian origin and with the recent origin of his title. This brought up the Lord Chancellor with his biggest guns. "He rose from the woolstack," says Butler in his "Reminiscences," "and advanced slowly to the place whence the Chancellor generally addresses the House; then fixing on the Duke the look of Jove when he grasps the thunder, 'I am amazed,' he said in a level tone of voice, 'at the attack the noble Duke has made on me. Yes, my lords—considerably raising his voice—I am amazed at his Grace's speech. The noble lord cannot look before him, behind him, and on either side of him, without seeing some noble peer who owes his seat in this House to his successful exertions in the profession to which I belong. Does he not feel that it is as honourable to owe it to these as to being the



*accident of an accident?* To all these noble lords the language of the noble Duke is as applicable and as insulting as it is to myself. But I don't fear to meet it single and alone. No one venerates the peerage more than I do; but I must say, my lords, the peerage solicited me, not I the peerage. Nay, more; I can say, and I will say, that as a peer of Parliament, as Speaker of this right honourable House, as Keeper of the Great Seal, as guardian of his Majesty's conscience, as Lord High Chancellor of England, nay, even in that character alone in which the noble Duke would think it an affront to be considered—as a man—I am at this moment as respectable—I beg leave to add that I am at this time as much respected—as the proudest peer I now look down upon.' The effect of this speech, both within the walls of Parliament and out of them, was prodigious. It gave Lord Thurlow an ascendancy in the House which no Chancellor had ever possessed; it invested him in public opinion with a character of independence and honour; and this, though he was ever on the unpopular side in politics, made him always popular with the people."

Thurlow is seen in a very different light in another episode with which his name is associated. The incident alluded to is the debate which took place in 1788 on the question of the Regency on the illness of George III. The Lord Chancellor intrigued impartially with both parties over the matter, and then finally decided that his own interests lay on the King's side. Accordingly, when on December 11th, 1788, a motion was brought forward in the House of Lords for the appointment of a Committee to search for precedents, he supported the proposal in a fulsome speech, concluding with these words: "And when I forget my King may my God forget me!" "It seems scarcely possible," says Stanhope in his "Life of Pitt," "to exaggerate the strong impression which that half-sentence made. Within the House itself, perhaps, the effect was not so satisfactory. Wilkes, who was standing under the throne, eyed the Chancellor askance, and muttered, 'God forget you? He will see you d—d first.' Burke at the same moment exclaimed with equal wit and with no profaneness, 'The best thing that can happen to you!' Pitt also was on the steps of the throne. On Lord Thurlow's imprecation he is said to have rushed out of the House exclaiming several times, 'Oh! what a rascal!'"

Associated with Lord Thurlow's Lord Chancellorship is the memorable theft of the Great Seal, which at the time it occurred caused almost national perturbation, and which even to this day has



*From an engraving on the printing by Dore.*

CHARLES PRATT, FIRST EARL CAMDEN.

Lord Chancellor from 1766 to 1770.

a leading place in the annals of crime. The offence was perpetrated at Thurlow's house, 45, Great Ormond Street, by a party of burglars, on the night of March 24th, 1784, the day before the dissolution of Parliament. The thieves effected an entrance by scaling the garden wall and forcing two bars out of the kitchen window. They broke open the drawers of the Lord Chancellor's writing table, annexed the Great Seal, and made off with it. When the loss was discovered the official world was aghast, as, without the precious emblem, State documents could not be properly prepared. Three days after the theft, no trace of the thieves having been discovered, a reward of £200 was offered, with free pardon to an accomplice. Subsequently the identity of the daring housebreakers was established, but not until the seal, which was of silver, had been reduced to common metal in the melting-pot. When this fact had been established, a new Great Seal was ordered to be prepared. In the meantime political gossip was busy with the story, and it was even suggested that the Whigs had instigated the robbery to stave off the then impending dissolution. It is to this phase of the incident that allusion is made in these well-known lines of *The Rollind*:—

The rugged Thurlow, who, with sullen scowl,  
In surly mood, at friend and foe will growl,  
Of proud prerogative the stern support,  
Defends the entrance of great George's Court  
'Gainst factions Whigs, lest they who stole the seal

The sacred diadem itself should steal;  
So have I seen near village butcher's stall  
(If things so great may be compared with small)  
A mastiff guarding on a market day,  
With snarling vigilance, his master's tray.



*Portrait presented to the National Portrait Gallery by T. Phillips, R.A.*

LORD THURLOW,

Lord Chancellor during Lord North's Administration, and, later, during Pitt's Ministry.  
He retired in 1792.

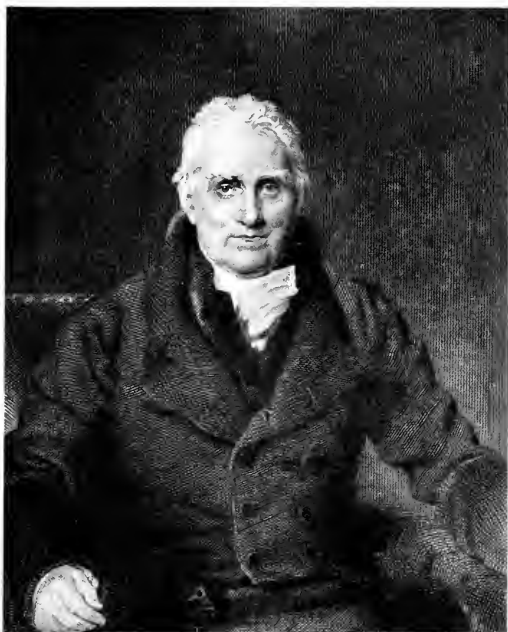
Since this awkward occurrence special pains have been taken to guard the Great Seal from predatory hands.

In the years immediately succeeding Lord Thurlow's tenure of office we find associated with the woosack the eminent names of Lord Eldon and Lord Erskine. The former was entrusted with the Great Seal first in Addington's Administration. He retained it, with the brief interregnum supplied by Lord Grenville's Premiership, until 1826, thus establishing a record of long service in the office. George III. showed a remarkable attachment to the Lord Chancellor. Again and again he extended to him marks of his esteem. When Pitt died and Ministers resigned, Eldon waited on his Royal patron to surrender the seals. "Lay them down on the sofa," said the King, indicating the seals. "for I cannot and will not take them from you. Yet I admit you cannot stay when all the rest have run away." In allusion to the monarch's partiality Lord Eldon himself once said, "I do not know what made George III. so fond of me, but he was fond of me. When I went to him for the seals, he had his coat buttoned at the lower part, and putting

his right hand within, he drew them out from the left side, saying, 'I give them to you from my heart.' Eldon made a dignified and popular Lord Chancellor. Such was the influence that he acquired in the office that when the Duke of Wellington resigned over the Catholic Emancipation question in 1829, he was sent for by George IV. to form a Ministry. After considering the question for a time, he declined to undertake the responsibility, and the King thereupon gave way and the Ministers were reinstated. He survived until January 13th, 1838, living long enough to take the oath to Queen Victoria.

Erskine's career belongs in the main to the law. His selection as Lord Chancellor was an accident, and his acceptance of the office, for which he was little fitted, was one of the greatest mistakes of his life, regarded from the standpoint of his reputation. Still, his is a name which lends an imperishable lustre to the annals of the Chancellorship. "The silver-tongued advocate,"

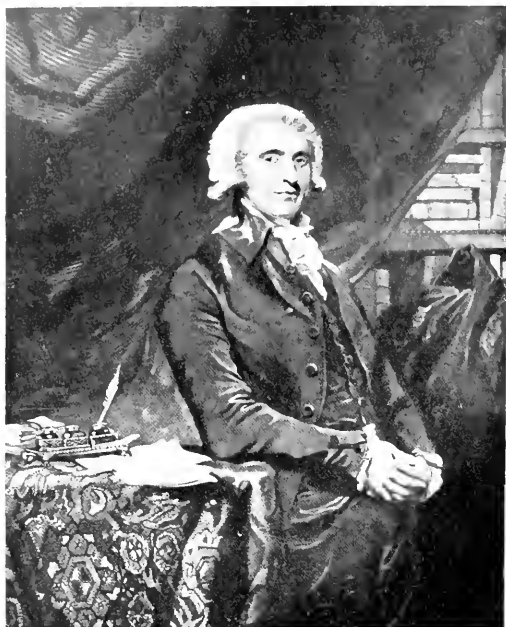
whose voice exercised a spell in the Law Courts of a potency which had never before been equalled and has never since been surpassed, he for a quarter of a century filled a unique place in English judicial life. Singularly enough, his adoption of a legal career was largely brought about by chance. His early youth was spent in the navy and the army—a bad nursery, it might be supposed, for forensic talent. Laboriously he qualified himself for the profession of arms, attaining to a more than common degree of proficiency. One day after his promotion to a full lieutenancy in the King's Royals, he, to while away an idle hour, dropped into an assize court where Lord Mansfield was presiding. This distinguished judge, observing the elegant-looking young soldier in full regimentals, an evidently deeply interested spectator of the proceedings, sent a message to him inviting him to a seat on the Bench. Erskine, of course, accepted the courtesy. Taking his seat by the side of the eminent jurist, he was favoured as the trial progressed with the judge's private comments upon it. The experience made such a vivid impression upon him that he forthwith determined to throw up his commission and try his skill at the Bar. After a probationary period, during which he underwent the direst straits, he gained a foothold at the Bar at last. His opportunity came in a romantic way. While at a friend's house during the public discussion of the charges of corruption brought against Lord Sandwich in connection with the administration of Greenwich Hospital, he expressed very forcibly his conviction of the substantial truth of the charges. One of his auditors was Thomas Baillie, the person who was mainly responsible for the accusations. Baillie, recognising in the ability and earnestness of the young lawyer invaluable qualities for an advocate, sent him a brief for the defence in the proceedings for libel which were brought against him. There were four other counsel in the case, and three of them urged compromise.



*After the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.*

JOHN SCOTT, EARL OF ELDON,

Lord Chancellor from 1801 until 1806, and again from 1807 until 1857.



*A 1900 oil portrait by Sir John Reynolds, P.R.A.*

THOMAS, FIRST BARON ERSKINE, K.T.,

Lord Chancellor in the Coalition "Ministry of All the Talents" under Grenville.

Erskine, however, resolutely resisted the idea of concession. In the end his views prevailed, and he justified them subsequently in a speech of marvellous eloquence and declamatory power. According to his own account, he found courage in the thought that his children were plucking at his gown crying to him that now was the time to get them bread. His impetuous advocacy completely turned the scales in Baillie's favour. It was a great triumph for the cause of purity of public life; it was a still greater triumph for the youthful and unknown barrister. From that moment briefs flowed in upon him uninterruptedly, until his annual income in 1791 reached the then unprecedented figure of £10,000. His successes were due to his brilliancy as an orator rather than to his ability as a lawyer. Endowed with a fine presence and engaging manners, he carefully cultivated the graces of style until he was without a peer in Westminster Hall for persuasive advocacy. He owed much of the art of effective speaking which he practised with such splendid success to Mrs. Siddons. He once said that "he had studied her cadences and intonation, and that to

the harmony of her periods and pronunciation he was indebted for his best displays."<sup>1</sup>

Magnificent as Erskine's powers were, they were not of the character to win immediate success in the House of Commons. The coldly critical audience which he there had to face had its own standards of oratory; it applied them at times with ruthless severity to the discomfiture of Parliamentary novices who had come into the House with great reputations made in other centres. In Erskine's case nothing certainly was taken on trust. His maiden speech, made on Fox's East India Bill, met with a reception which was ostentatiously contemptuous. The scene is vividly described in Croly's "Life of George IV.": "Pitt sat evidently intending to reply, with pen and paper in his hand, prepared to catch the arguments of this formidable adversary. He wrote a word or two; Erskine proceeded; but with every additional sentence Pitt's attention to the paper relaxed, his look became more careless, and he obviously began to think the orator less and less worthy of his attention. At length, when every eye in the House was fixed upon him, with a contemptuous smile he dashed the pen through the paper and flung them on the floor. Erskine never recovered from this expression of disdain. His voice faltered, he struggled through the remainder of his speech and sank into his seat dispirited and shorn of his fame." When, later, Pitt had to reply, he emphasised the feeling with which he regarded the speech. After announcing his intention to reply to both Fox and Erskine he said, "But I shall make no mention of what was said by the honourable gentleman who spoke last; he did no more than regularly repeat what was said by the member who preceded him, and regularly weaken all he repeated." There is reason

<sup>1</sup> Campbell's "Life of Siddons."



*Portrait of John Singleton Copley, Baron Lyndhurst, by Sir John Everett Millais, 1845.*

JOHN SINGLETON COPLCY, BARON LYNDBURST.

Lord Eldon's successor in the Lord Chancery's office. He was three times appointed to the office, and finally resigned in 1845 on Lord's retirement.

to think that Pitt's scornful attitude was as unjust as it was unworthy of him in any circumstances. Wrexall plainly says as much in his "Memoirs." According to him, Erskine, so far from failing, as his enemies declared, appeared to exhibit "shining powers of declamation." Whatever the truth may be, Pitt's reception of the speech appears to have made a deep and lasting impression on Erskine. Such was the awe which the Great Commoner inspired in him, that on one occasion some years later, at a public dinner, a casual remark from Pitt while he was speaking stopped the flow of his oratory and compelled him to sit down in confusion.

Erskine, though a matchless advocate, had none of the qualities essential to the highest judicial office. There was, consequently, great surprise when, on the formation of the "Ministry of All the Talents," he was brought in to fill the Lord Chancellorship. Romilly declared him to be totally unfit for the situation. Others were even more outspoken; the appointment, in fact, was universally condemned. Erskine during the short time that he held the Great Seal had little opportunity of distinguishing himself, and it would be unfair to say that the harsh judgment of his fitness for the post passed by his contemporaries was justified. But it is a fact that from the moment he entered office his reputation declined. After his resignation on April 1st, 1807, he gradually receded from the public eye. During the troubles arising out of the charges brought against Queen Caroline he regained something of his old popularity by his generous speeches in defence of the Royal lady. But the recovery was only transient. He passed the last years of his life in comparative obscurity and neglect.

Worthy to be associated with Eldon and Erskine in the list of famous Lord Chancellors is John Singleton Copley, Lord Lyndhurst, who, appointed Lord Chancellor first in 1827 in Canning's Administration, occupied the woolsack continuously until the accession of Earl Grey to the Premiership, and subsequently held the seals during Sir Robert Peel's two Administrations. Lord Lyndhurst's career is not less remarkable than that of his two eminent predecessors; in one respect it is more notable. In an age in which the Lord Chancellorship was conspicuous for the longevity of those who filled it, he established almost a record for virility of intellect. For close upon a half-century he was a leading figure in public life; to the last year of his life his influence in political affairs was very marked. On February 7th, 1856, he delivered in the House of Lords a speech on the Life Peerages question, which

Campbell says "was the most wonderful ever heard. It would have been admirable for a man of thirty-five, and for a man of eighty-four it was miraculous." More than three years later, in July, 1859, Lyndhurst distinguished himself by another great speech in the House of Lords on the subject of our continental relations, *appropos* of the war then being waged in Italy by France. His remarks were characterised by a mental grip and vigour and a boldness of conception extraordinary in one who was almost a nonagenarian. "Self-reliance," he said, "is the best road to distinction in private life; it is equally essential to the character and grandeur of a nation. It will be necessary for our defence that we should have a military force sufficient to cope with any



HENRY PETER, FIRST BARON BROUGHAM AND VAUX,  
Lord Chancellor in Earl Grey's Administration.

Power or combination of Powers that may be brought against us. The question of the money expense sinks into insignificance. It is the price that we must pay for our insurance, and it is but a moderate price for so important an insurance. I know that there are persons who will say, 'Let us run the risk.' Be it so; but, my lords, if the calamity should come, if the conflagration should take place, what words can describe the extent of the calamity, or what imagination can paint the overwhelming ruin that would fall upon us? I shall be told, perhaps, that these are the timid counsels of old age. My lords, for myself, I should run no risk. Personally, I have nothing to fear. But to point out possible peril, and how to guard effectively against it, that is surely to be considered not as timidity, but as the dictates of wisdom and prudence. I have confined myself to facts that cannot be disputed. I think I have confined myself also to inferences which no man can successfully contravene. I hope what I have said has been in accordance with your feelings and opinions. I shall terminate what I have said in two emphatic words, *Ve victis!*—words of solemn and most significant import." Even this inspiring oration did not mark the last appearance of the venerable ex-Lord Chancellor upon the political stage. He intervened in debate again on May 21st, 1860, delivering a speech of singular power, having regard to his great age, on the second reading of the bill for the repeal of the paper duty. His final effort was a contribution to a discussion on a legal bill on May 7th, 1861. Though then closely verging on ninety, this Nestor of the House of Lords, as he was called, spoke with unabated intellectual force, and with a precision which extorted general admiration.

Perhaps the closest parallel to the career of Lord Lyndhurst is supplied by the life of Lord Brougham, his successor of 1830 on the woolsack. With the stormy early legal and political life of this statesman we have already dealt in another chapter, and it is only necessary here to say that when he succeeded to the Lord Chancellorship he had already behind him a record of strenuous effort sufficient to fill an ordinary lifetime. Yet for more than thirty years subsequently he was an active public man, and in 1863, when eighty-five, he was sufficiently vigorous in body and mind to deliver, as President of the Social Science Congress, an address at Edinburgh in which the progress of scientific effort was ably and exhaustively surveyed.

As Lord Chancellor in the Grey Administration, Brougham was intimately associated with the political proceedings which preceded the passing of the Reform Bill. It was he who accompanied Grey on that memorable visit to William IV., in April, 1831, and who extorted from the reluctant monarch the necessary authorisation for a dissolution of Parliament, with a view to an appeal to the country on the Reform question. From the accounts which have been published of that curious interview—perhaps the most remarkable that ever took place between a British sovereign and his Ministers—we may gather that it was Brougham's bold line of argument which turned the King from an attitude of resentful anger to one of good-humoured if reluctant acquiescence. The Chancellor's services to the Ministry on this



SIR EDWARD BURTENSHAW SUGDEN, LORD ST. LEONARDS  
Lord Chancellor for a few months in 1852.

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*Engraved photo by Maull & Fox.*

SIR FREDERIC THESIGER, LORD CHELMSFORD,  
Lord Chancellor in 1858, and again in 1865.

port, picked him up and placed him safely on the woolsack. Like Burke's famous dagger scene in the House of Commons, this prostration was a failure; so unsuited was it to the spectators and to the actor that it produced a sensation of ridicule, and considerably impaired the effect of a speech displaying wonderful powers of memory and of intellect." There is a strong tinge of sensationalism in this description, suggestive of an overcharged pen. Nevertheless, Brougham did unquestionably on this occasion indulge in no common degree a weakness he had for theatrical effect.

Another of his foibles, a disposition to be vituperative, did not desert him when he took his seat on the woolsack. A flagrant instance in point is supplied in a speech which he made in July, 1832, in reference to a motion brought forward in the House of Commons by Sir Edward Sugden (afterwards Lord St. Leonards) for an inquiry into matters with which the Lord Chancellor was concerned. "My lords," said Brougham, "we have all read that it is this heaven-born thirst for information, and its invariable concomitants, a self-disregarding and candid mind, that most distinguishes men from the lower animals, from the crawling reptile, from the wasp that stings, and from the wasp that fain would but cannot sting; distinguishes us, my lords, not only from the insect that crawls and stings, but from that more powerful because more offensive creature, the bug, which, powerful and offensive as it is, is but vermin. Yes, I say that it is this laudable propensity upon which humanity justly prides itself, which, I have no doubt, solely influenced the learned gentleman to whom I allude to seek for information which it would be cruel to stingily gratify." The signal lack of dignity, to say nothing of the gross offensiveness of this attack, explains to some extent the reason why Brougham, with all his commanding talents, never secured a really high place in popular estimation.

occasion were supplemented later by a vigorous and sustained defence of the Government position in the House of Lords. His speech on the second reading of the second Reform Bill in October, 1831, was an exceptionally brilliant effort. Campbell gives a vivid description of the oration in his work. Brougham, he says, "showed a most stupendous memory and extraordinary dexterity in handling the weapons both of ridicule and of reason. Without a note to refer to, he went through all the speeches of his opponents delivered during the five nights' debate, analysing them successively, and, with a little aid from perversion, giving them all a seemingly triumphant answer. The peroration was partly inspired by draughts of mulled port, imbibed by him very copiously towards the conclusion of the four hours during which he was on his legs or on his knees. 'I pray and exhort you not to reject this measure. By all you hold most dear, by all the ties that bind every one of us to our common order and our common country, I solemnly adjure you—I warn you—I implore you—yea, on my bended knees (he kneels) I supplicate you—reject not this bill.' He continued for some time as if in prayer; but his friends, alarmed for him lest he should be suffering from the effects of the mulled





*From an engraving after the portrait by Sir E. Grant, P.R.A.*

JOHN, LORD CAMPBELL,

Lord Chancellor from 1859 until 1861. He was the author of "The Lives of the Lord Chancellors."

activity, rapidity, and pungency, *sal-volatile* is nothing when compared with my noble and learned friend. You may put a stopper of glass or leather on that ethereal essence, but I defy any human power, even that of my noble and learned friend himself, to put any stopper, either of glass or leather or any other material, over the activity, ingenuity, or pungency of his mind." To this Brougham replied in a similar bantering strain, and the incident closed in general good-humour. In his later years Brougham was a greater force outside Parliament than in it; but he retained, as we have seen, the freshness of his faculties, and pursued to the end of the chapter that active career which had been his from his earliest youth.

When we take leave of the era in which Erskine, Eldon, Lyndhurst, and Brougham adorned the wool-sack, we come upon the modern line of Lord Chancellors, the great lawyers whose careers are more or less familiar to the present generation. It cannot be claimed, perhaps, that they occupied so commanding a position in the political world as the men who had gone before them; but in point of legal ability and capacity for the office they filled, they do not compare unfavourably with them. Cottenham, Truro, St. Leonards, Chelmsford, Campbell, Westbury, Cranworth, Cairns, Hatherley, Selborne, Herschell—these are names which compose a list of lawyers of varying degrees of ability; but, taken as a whole, they make up a body which confers no discredit on the annals of the Lord

An episode which occurred in the House of Lords in 1850 has a bearing upon this subject of Brougham's personal failing, and it may be referred to both on that account and because it throws an amusing sidelight upon the relations of the party leaders of the period. Speaking at a Mansion House banquet in 1850, Lord Stanley alluded to Lord Brougham (who was not present) as "his noble and learned but somewhat volatile friend." The ex-Lord Chancellor, nettled at the reference, brought the matter up at the sitting of the House of Lords on the following evening. He challenged Lord Stanley to explain himself. "Volatile means flighty," he said; "but I, to answer a speech made in my presence, have never flown to the House of Mayors." Stanley's reply was characteristic. He expressed his regret that he had caused disquietude to "his noble and learned and very grave and discreet friend," but at the same time was not prepared to withdraw the epithet used on the previous evening. "In point," said he, "of acuteness,



*From a photograph Martin & Fox.*

RICHARD BETHELL, LORD WESTBURY,

Lord Chancellor from 1861 until 1865.

Chancellorship. Only in one instance is there the slightest cloud upon the reputation of these modern Lord Chancellors. The exception is supplied by Lord Westbury, who was Lord Chancellor in Lord Palmerston's second Administration. Against this distinguished man charges of official irregularity were brought, and the House of Commons, on July 3rd, 1865, passed by 177 votes to 163 a motion declaring that the Lord Chancellor had been guilty of "a laxity of practice and a want of caution in sanctioning the grant of retiring pensions to public officers over whose heads grave charges are impending, and in filling up the vacancies made by the retirement of such officers . . . and that such laxity and want of caution are highly reprehensible, and calculated to throw discredit on the administration of the high offices of State."

A censure so severe could have only one effect. Lord Westbury resigned on the day following the passing of the resolution, and his resignation was accepted. In announcing the fact in the House of Lords, he said: "With regard to the opinion expressed by the House of Commons I do not propose to say a word. I am bound to accept the decision. I may, however, express the hope that after an interval of time calmer thoughts will prevail, and a



THE WOOLSAK.

The official seat of the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords.

more favourable view be taken of my conduct." The hope was not unjustified. Reviewing the circumstances which led up to Lord Westbury's dismissal, away from the prejudices of the time, it is impossible to deny that he was harshly treated. That there was no great sympathy at the time for the Lord Chancellor is to be accounted for by the fact that his manners were by no means conciliatory. One flagrant specimen of his style is to be found in an incident

which occurred in the House of Lords a few months before his downfall, and which excited much indignation at the time amongst an influential section of the public. The occurrence arose out of the then recent judgment of Convocation in the case of "Essays and Reviews." Lord Houghton drew attention to this decision, and asked whether the law officers of the Crown had been consulted as to the competency of Convocation to take the action they had done. Lord Westbury replied in a speech which seemed to be designedly offensive. "There were three modes," he said, "of dealing with Convocation when it is permitted to come into action and transact real business. The first is, while they are harmlessly busy, to take no notice of the proceedings; the second is, when they seem likely to get into mischief, to prorogue and put an end to their proceedings; the third, when they have done something clearly beyond their powers, is to bring them before a court of justice and punish them." Later on he spoke of the judgment as "a series of well-lubricated terms—a sentence so oily and saponaceous that no one could grasp it." "Like an eel," he added, "it slips through the fingers—it is simply nothing; and I am glad to tell my noble friend that it is literally no sentence at all."



*From a drawing by George Richmond, R.A., by permission of Grillon's Club.*

SIR HUGH M. CAIRNS, EARL CAIRNS.

Lord Chancellor in 1868 and in 1874.



*From a drawing by George Richmond, R.A., by permission of Grillon's Club.*

SIR ROUNDSELL PALMER, EARL OF SELBORNE,

Lord Chancellor from 1872 till 1874.

These observations were plainly pointed at Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, who was reputed to have drafted the judgment, and whose popular sobriquet of "Soapy Sam" lent itself to the broad method of sarcasm which Lord Westbury adopted. Bishop Wilberforce was not slow to resent the attack made upon him and his order. He did so in a speech of much severity. "If a man has no respect for himself" he exclaimed in a burst of indignation, "he ought, at all events, to respect the audience before which he speaks; and when the highest representative of the law in England in your lordships' Court, upon a matter involving the liberties of the subject and the religion of the realm, and all those high truths concerning which this discussion has arisen, can think it fit to descend to ribaldry, in which he knows he can safely indulge, because those to whom he addresses it will have too much respect for their characters to answer him in like sort,—I say that this House has ground to complain of having its character unnecessarily injured in the sight of the people of this land, by one occupying so high a position within it. . . . I would rather subject myself, in the presence of my countrymen and your noble House, to any amount of that invective and insinuation, and all those arts of—I will not say what part of the Bar of England—of which we have seen something to-night; I would, I repeat, rather a thousand times incur it all than to look back on my deathbed upon myself as one of those who had not striven for the truth of our Established Church, and had not encountered, because I was afraid personally of the consequences, anything which the maintenance of that truth might entail." This high-minded protest was very widely approved, even by those who did not share the Bishop's



*From a photo by Mr. Leitch Stenographic Co., Ltd., Chicago.*

SIR HARDINGE GIFFARD, EARL OF HALSBURY,  
Lord Chancellor 1885, 1886, and 1895.



*From a photo by Messrs. E. & F. Vignery.*

SIR FARRAR HERSCHELL, LORD HERSCHELL,  
Lord Chancellor 1886 and 1892.

views as to the Convocation judgment. The feeling was that Lord Westbury had signally failed in his speech to preserve the dignity of his high office, and had as signally shown his incapacity to realise what was due to others also occupying an exalted position in the State.

In the most recent years the current of the Lord Chanceryship has run with almost unbroken smoothness. Lord Herschell, who occupied the woolsack in Mr. Gladstone's Administrations, was a sound lawyer, who cared a good deal more for the legal than for the political traditions of the high office; and Lord Halsbury, who has been Lord Chancellor in the Unionist Administrations since 1895, has to a great extent followed in his footsteps. But if the later history of the office has been in a political and picturesque sense uneventful, it has not been without an element of impressiveness in the unvarying dignity and high-minded devotion with which its duties have been discharged.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### *THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTS.*

SOME thirty-six hours after William IV. had breathed his last at Windsor on June 20th, 1837, the House of Commons assembled to hear read the first address from the maiden upon whom the destinies of the country had devolved. Eagerly expectant members crowded the benches of the temporary structure which, pending the erection of the new Houses of Parliament, served as a place of assembly. Soon Lord John Russell, then Home Secretary, appeared at the Bar with the precious missive, and over the serried ranks swept the cry, "Hats off!" followed by the measured admonition of the Speaker (Abercromby), "Members must be uncovered." Instantly every head save one was bared. The apparent offender against etiquette was Sir John Graham, a prominent and popular member who had sat for nearly twenty years in the House. Angry glances were directed towards him by his fellows, and subsequently an evening paper commented in scathing terms upon the want of loyalty shown. Stung by the criticisms, Sir John Graham the next day entered upon a justification of his attitude, explaining that he had conformed to the older, and, as he thought, better, custom of waiting until the initiatory word "Regina" or "Rex" was uttered before uncovering, thus making in more emphatic fashion the tribute of respect. The Speaker acknowledged the accuracy of this reading of the rules, and thereafter the House passed to the ordinary business.

In this curious little incident we have an indication of the feelings with which the Victorian era in Parliament was entered upon. Loyalty quickened at the thought that after the lapse of more than a century and a quarter a woman was once more at the head of the nation; natural sentiments were awakened by the spectacle which the previous day had provided of a young girl with regal bearing, yet withal maidenly modesty, taking her place at the head of the Council Board at which had gathered the men who had grown old in the service of the State. Generally there was a desire, in the presence of the new conditions which had been created, to sink party differences and co-operate for the advancement of the public weal. But



LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

One of the leading statesmen of the Victorian era.

auspiciously as the new reign commenced, few, if any, of those who on that June day gathered in the popular chamber could in their wildest imaginings have pictured the remarkable period in Parliamentary life which was to run its course before the Sovereign whose message they had received with so much respect was laid to rest in the stately mausoleum at Frogmore. In truth, the Victorian era in Parliament was one of the most eventful, as politically, perhaps, it was the most impressive, in the history of the Legislature. Commencing within a short period after the country had thrown off the shackles of a corrupt and outworn electoral system, it witnessed the advancement of the people by successive stages to a position of supreme power. Simultaneously it saw accomplished economic, sociological, and educational changes of a vast and wide-reaching character, and it marked the development of the Empire from an inchoate and feeble system into a powerful, well-knit organisation.

In their personal character the earliest Parliaments of the late Queen's reign lacked something of the lustre which had attached to the Legislature a half-century earlier, and which was to distinguish it a half-century later. But if there was no Chatham, or Pitt, or Canning



"WE, THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND!"

A famous caricature illustrating a familiar episode in the political career of Lord John Russell.

to electrify a listening world by his oratory, and to dazzle an admiring country by his statesmanship, the stage was occupied by men who yet fill a very respectable place in history. Looking back, we find foremost in the ranks Sir Robert Peel, still with the greatest part of his career before him, but nevertheless in the enjoyment of a commanding reputation as a Parliamentary leader. By his side is Stanley, "the Rupert of debate," steadily adding to his already great fame as a brilliant orator. On the opposite benches sit Lord John Russell, the hero of the battle of Reform, a statesman of great influence and untarnished honour, and Lord Palmerston, already qualified by successful tenure of office for the splendid position he was subsequently to fill as the greatest of modern administrators of foreign affairs. Looming large in the background is the familiar figure of Macaulay, an object of awed admiration to his fellows, and farther away are visible the clear-cut, eager features of Gladstone, "the rising hope of the stern, unbending Tories," and as yet nothing more. In "the other House" the Duke of Wellington is observable, still a notable political figure, albeit his course of active statesmanship is nearly run. Confronting him are Earl Grey and Lord Brougham, both in a political sense somewhat extinct volcanoes, while special attention is attracted by Lord Melbourne,



*From the photograph by Sir D. B. Allen, R. A., in the Royal collection at Windsor.*

#### THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA AT KENSINGTON PALACE, JUNE 20TH, 1857.

"At five two she held a Council, at which she presided with as much ease as if she had been doing nothing else all her life. . . . She looked very well, though so small in stature and without youth perfection to beauty. The expressions of her manner and the good expression of her countenance gave her on the whole a very agreeable appearance, and with her youth inspired an excessive interest in all who approached her. . . ." *Diary of the Queen*, George IV. and William IV., by G. C. F. Knollys.



*From the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A.*

WILLIAM LAMB, SECOND VISCOUNT MELBOURNE,  
The first Prime Minister of Queen Victoria and her political mentor.

to whom belongs the double distinction of being Queen Victoria's first Prime Minister and her political tutor. It is a galaxy of political genius remarkable, perhaps, more for its promise of future greatness than for its record of achievement. But it was no discredit to the birth of an era such as that which the accession of Queen Victoria ushered in.

By virtue of his position at the head of the Ministry, as well as by reason of the circumstances which had given him ascendancy at Court, the commanding political figure at this period was Lord Melbourne. This peer was a man of respectable talents and excellent judgment; but it cannot be claimed for him that he fills a place in the front rank of political leaders. His statesmanship was uninspired and lacking in definiteness. He had none of the magnetic qualities which are essential to a Parliamentary success of the highest description. Moreover, he was constitutionally indolent, and showed a rooted aversion to any step which would call for

strenuous and sustained exertion. A favourite saying of his when new proposals were submitted by his colleagues was, "Why can't you let it alone?" Though a Liberal, he preferred smooth water, with occasionally stagnation, to the rough-and-tumble of angry seas with possible progress. His bent of political mind, in fact, is well represented by the sentiment, "Anything for a quiet life." Not, however, that he was incapable of intellectual exertion when his feelings or interests were involved. There was an episode in the Irish Church Debate in the House of Lords in 1833 which showed that he could on occasion play a remarkably forceful *rôle*. Haydon, the painter, who was in the House at the time, describes the incident. "In the debate the Duke of Wellington," he says, "spoke well, without hesitation, enforcing what he said with a bend of his head, striking his hand forcibly and as if convinced on the papers. He finished, and to my utter astonishment, up starts Melbourne like an artillery rocket. He began in a fury. His language flowed out like fire. But the moment the stimulus was over his habitual apathy got ahead; he stammered, hummed, and lawed. It was the most pictorial exhibition of the night. He waved his white hand with the natural grace of Thalma, expanded his broad chest, looked right at his adversary like a handsome lion, and grappled him with the grace of Paris."

Another and even better example of Melbourne in his effective style is supplied by the debate in the House of Lords at the close of the session of 1836 in regard to the policy of the Government. After a violent attack upon Ministers by Lord Lyndhurst, Melbourne rose and delivered a telling speech in reply. "The noble and learned lord," he said, "has referred to several historical characters to whom he has been pleased to say I bear some



resemblance. I beg in return to remind him of what was once said by Lord Bristol of a great statesman of former times (the Earl of Strafford), to whom I think the noble and learned lord might not inapplicablely be compared: 'The malignity of his practices was largely aggravated by his vast talents, whereof God hath given the use and the devil the application.' . . . The noble and learned lord kindly advises me to resign, notwithstanding his own great horror of taking office after his ambition is already so fully satisfied. But I will tell the noble and learned lord that I will not be accessory to the sacrifice of himself which he would be ready to make if the burthen of the Great Seal were again forced upon him. I conscientiously believe that the well-being of the country requires in the judgment of the people that I should hold my present office—and hold it I will until I am removed." Lyndhurst, though most effectively retorted upon, bore no malice. After the speech he went across to the Premier and engaged in friendly and laughing converse with him on the incidents of the debate. It was difficult, in truth, to be angry with Melbourne. He was the soul of good humour, and he displayed, moreover, a homely unconventionality of both style and utterance which was a passport to all hearts. The political memoirs are thickly strewn with stories of his amusing frankness. To an old friend who called on him to solicit a marquise, just before the late Queen's coronation, he said: "Why, you are not such a fool as that, are you?" On another occasion when he was importuned by a sedulous place-hunter, whom he once described as "a fellow who asked for everything and was fit for nothing," he showed the written application he had received to a colleague, observing, "What the devil would he have now? Does he want a Garter for the other leg?" Of a somewhat different type to these outspoken comments is Melbourne's well-remembered criticism of Croker, that he would dispute with the Recording Angel about the number of his sins; and his not less familiar statement in reference to Catholic Emancipation: "The worst of it is, the fools were in the right." Yet another good story which may be introduced here relates to the Corn Law agitation. Melbourne was strongly opposed to any alteration of the law, and it was with great reluctance that he assented to the proposal in 1838 that the question of a low fixed duty should be made an open question. After the Cabinet meeting at which the decision was come to, Ministers were separating when Melbourne shouted after his party colleagues: "Stop a bit! Is it to be lower corn or isn't it? It doesn't matter much which; but we must all say the same thing."

Though the poles asunder from the conventional courtier, Melbourne made, according to almost universal testimony, an admirable guardian for the youthful Queen. His great political sagacity, his deep insight into human nature, and his sterling personal qualities combined to ensure success in a domain in which a man of elegant manners and a master of etiquette might have failed. On this point the Duke of Wellington's testimony may be cited. "I happen to know," the Duke said, in the



*From an engraving after the picture of T. Phillips, R.A.*

CHARLES, SECOND EARL GREY.

The statesman under whose auspices the Reform Bill was carried.

course of a speech in the House of Lords in 1841, "that it is her Majesty's opinion that the noble Viscount has rendered her Majesty the greatest possible service, making her acquainted with the mode and policy of the government of the country, initiating her into the laws and spirit of the Constitution, independently of the performance of his duty as the servant of her Majesty's Crown; teaching her, in short, to preside over the destinies of this great country."

Lord Melbourne's chief henchman in the House of Commons at the time of the late Queen's accession was Lord John Russell, a trusted and popular leader, whose intimate association with the passing of the great Reform Act gave him a position of great power in the country. In the House of Commons he showed consummate qualities of leadership, fighting almost single-handed against a powerful combination. His appearance at this period is graphically sketched by Mr. Maddyn in his "Chiefs of Parties" in the following passage: "His outward form was frail and weakly; his countenance sickled over with the effects of ill-health and solitary self-communing; his figure shrunken below the dimensions of ordinary mankind; his general air that of a meditative invalid. But within that feeble body was a spirit that knew not how to cower, a brave heart that could pulsate vehemently with large and heroic emotions, a soul that aspired to live nobly in a proud and right manly career. His voice was weak, his accent was mincing with affectation, his elocution broken, stammering and uncertain, save when in a few lucky moments his tongue seemed unloosed, and there came rushing from his lips a burst of epigrammatic sentences—logical, eloquent, and terse, and occasionally vivified by the fire of genius. Then would his right hand be convulsively clenched, his head proudly thrown back, the outline of his face become rigid and drawn, and the small form seem to dilate, while the cheeks would blanchen with moral excitement, as the ecstasy of applauding partisanship made the walls of the Senate ring with echoing cheers."



*From the painting by Sir David Wilkie in the National Portrait Gallery.*

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, K.G.,

One of the great political leaders of the early Victorian period.

Though an ardent reformer, Lord John was not disposed to lend any sanction to the efforts that were then being made by the advanced wing of his party to carry still further the process of remodelling the Constitution. A speech he made on the very threshold of the new reign indicating his views led to the application to him of the familiar nickname of "Finality John." "Her Majesty's Ministers," he said, speaking in June, 1837, in reference to the Reform Act, "while they consider it a final measure, do not intend that it should remain a barren Act upon the Statute Book, but that it should be followed up in such a manner as would enoble, invigorate, and enlarge the institutions of the country." A good many years afterwards Lord John Russell availed himself of the opportunity provided by a debate in the House of Commons to explain that he had not used the phrase in the sense imputed to him; but the sobriquet had then got far too good a start to be recalled. Almost to the day of his death it had its place in the common political currency.

Lord John Russell's chief rivals at the period of his career with which we are dealing were Sir Robert Peel and Mr. (afterwards





*Portrait of Henry John Temple, Third Viscount Palmerston, K.G. by Sir George Haydon, 1841.*

# HENRY JOHN TEMPLE, THIRD VISCOUNT PALMERSTON, K.G.

1794-1865. British statesman and Foreign Minister, twice served as Prime Minister, served as Foreign Secretary, held a high position in the Conservative Party.

Lord) Stanley. Both were Parliamentarians of the highest capacity; both had strongly marked personal qualities which distinguished them from him. Peel was a skilful debater—strong, logical, and practical; but his manner was cold and unconciliatory, and even when he commanded the undivided allegiance of the Conservative Party, he may be said to have held his position by force of character rather than by ties of affection. Stanley had all Peel's cleverness with the added quality of brilliancy. Macaulay said of him that "his knowledge of the science of party defence resembles an instinct," and the great writer cited him as the sole instance of an eminent debater who had not made himself a master of his art at the expense of his audience. Professor Pryme, in this passage from his "Autobiographic Recollections," confirms and strengthens this estimate: "I have heard Pitt, Fox, and other great speakers, but never any to equal Lord Derby, when Mr. Stanley, for elegance and sweetness of expression." Lord Lytton's description of Lord Stanley in his poem, *The New Timon*, may also be cited as a contemporary testimony to the statesman's genius:—



*From an engraving after a drawing by George Richmond, R.A., by permission of Lord Stanley's Club.*

EDWARD STANLEY, FOURTEENTH EARL OF DERBY.

"The Rupert of debate"

The brilliant chief, irregularly great,  
Frank, haughty, rash—the Rupert of debate—  
Nor gout, nor toil, his freshness can destroy,  
And time still leaves all Eton in the boy.  
First in the class and keenest in the ring,  
He saps like Gladstone, and he fights like Spring.  
Ev'n at the feast his pluck pervades the board,  
And dauntless gamecocks symbolise their lord.  
As where a-tilt at friend—if barred from foe—  
He scorns the ground and volunteers the blow;

And, tired with conquest over Dan and Snob,  
Plants a slight brasier on the nose of Bob,  
Decorous Bob, too friendly to reprove,  
Suggests fresh fighting in the next remove,  
And prompts his chum, in hopes the vein to cool,  
To the prim benches of the Upper School.  
Yet who not listens with delighted smile  
To the pure Saxon of that silver style?  
In the clear style a heart as clear is seen,  
Prompt to the rash—revolting from the mean.

Stanley's powers were directed at the time of which we are writing to the delivery of damaging attacks upon the Melbourne Ministry for their subservience to the Irish vote. The fact that the Government was practically kept in power by O'Connell was scathingly denounced by Stanley, and always amid approving cheers. In no instance was his invective more successful than on one occasion when he quoted these lines from Shakespeare:—

But shall it be that you, that set the crown  
Upon the head of this forgetful man,  
And for his sake wear the detested blot  
Of murderous subornation—shall it be  
That you a world of curses undergo,  
Being the agents or base second means.  
The cords, the ladder, or the hangman rather?  
Oh, pardon me that I descend so low  
To show the line and the predicament

Wherein you range under this subtle king.  
Shall it for shame be spoken in these days,  
Or fill up chronicles in time to come,  
That men of your nobility and power  
Did 'rage them both in an unjust behalf  
As both of you—God pardon it—have done?  
And shall it be, in more shame, further spoken  
That you are fooled, discarded, and shook off  
By him for whom these shames ye underwent?



JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY, LORD LYNDBURST,  
Lord Chancellor under Canning in 1827, and subsequently in the Ministry  
of 1834 and the Peel Administration of 1841-46.

Quoting Shakespeare in the House of Commons is a hazardous practice, but Stanley had rightly gauged his audience. The telling sentences of the national writer were received with immense enthusiasm. They were felt to hit off most aptly a situation which, in the opinion of the Conservative Opposition, was degrading to the country. On the Irish side there was a not unnatural disposition shown to resent these and similar attacks upon their association with the Government. Probably the most remarkable—certainly the most eloquent—retort which was made was embodied in an oration of Richard Lalor Sheil, a notable member of O'Connell's party, to a speech of Lord Lyndhurst's in the House of Lords in which the Irish had been referred to as aliens.

"Where," asked Sheil, "was Arthur Duke of Wellington when these words were uttered? Methinks he would have started up to disclaim them. The battles, sieges, fortunes that he'd passed ought to have come back upon him. He ought to have remembered that from the earliest achievement in which he displayed that military

genius which has placed him foremost in the annals of modern warfare, down to the last and surpassing combat which has made his name imperishable—from Assaye to Waterloo—the Irish soldiers with whom your armies were filled were the inseparable auxiliaries to the glory with which his unparalleled successes have been crowned. Whose were the athletic arms that drove your bayonets at Viniera through the phalanxes that never reeled in the shock of war before? What desperate valour climbed the steep and filled the mounds of Badajos? All his victories should have rushed and crowded back upon his memory—Viniera, Badajos, Salamanca, Albuera, Toulouse, and, last of all, the greatest. Tell me, for you were there—I appeal to the gallant soldier before me—(pointing to Sir Henry Hardinge) who has, I know, a generous heart in an intrepid breast—tell me, for you must needs remember on that day when the destinies of mankind were trembling in the balance, while death fell in showers upon them; when the artillery of France, levelled with the precision of the most deadly science, played upon them; when her legions, incited by the voice, inspired by the example of their mighty leader, rushed again and again to the contest;—tell me if for an instant (when to hesitate for an instant was to be lost) the 'aliens' blanched? And when, at length, the moment for the last decisive movement had arrived; when the valour, so long wisely checked, was at last let loose; when with words familiar but immortal the great captain exclaimed, 'Up, lads, and at them!'—tell me if Catholic Ireland with less heroic valour than the natives of your own glorious isle precipitated itself upon the foe? The blood of England, Scotland, and Ireland flowed in the same stream on the same field; when the chill morning dawned their dead lay cold and stark together; in the same deep pit their bodies were deposited; the green arm of spring is now breaking on their commingled dust; the dew falls from heaven upon their union in the grave. Partakers in every peril, in the glory shall we not participate? And shall we be told, as a requital, that we are estranged from the noble country for whose salvation our life-blood was poured out?"

A great effect was produced by this pure piece of oratory. The passionate vehemence of

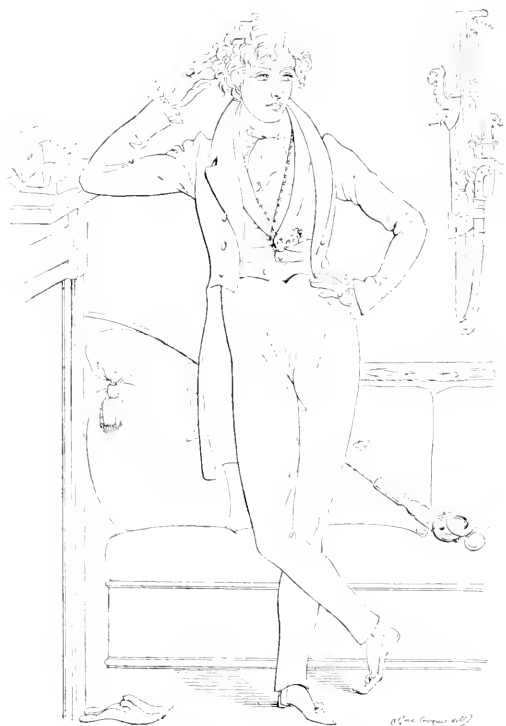
the speaker, and the mournful music of his voice, says Francis in his "Orators of the Age," were a living echo to the deep emotions with which his soul seemed charged.

Far superior to Sheil in political talents, though greatly his inferior in oratory, was his leader, Daniel O'Connell. This remarkable man occupied a position in Parliament the like of which had never been filled by any politician who had not held office. As we have seen, his was the power behind the throne during the continuance of the Melbourne Ministry. So well drilled were his legions, so completely were Ministries at his mercy, that he could at any time have displaced them if it had suited his interests. His qualities appealed rather to the crowd than to a critical audience such as he had to face at Westminster; yet he filled a great place there quite apart from the prestige which belonged to him as a powerful political leader, capable of making and unmaking ministries. It is difficult to analyse the elements of his strength; but it may be affirmed with some degree of certainty that a racy gift of native humour, coupled with a bland indifference to externals, which his enemies called impudence, went a long way towards building up his great reputation. His wit was never more effectively employed than in gibbeting a political opponent in verse, as he was in the habit of doing, to the delight of the House. One of the best remembered and most telling of his parodies was the following one on three well-known members, Colonels Sibthorp, Perceval, and Verner, who had attracted his malicious shafts by their political action:—

Three colonels in three distant counties born,  
Lincoln, Armagh, and Sligo did adorn;  
The first in matchless impudence surpassed,  
The next in bigotry, in both the last.

The force of Nature could no further go—  
To beard the third she shaved the other two.

The point of the humour lies in the fact that while Perceval and Verner stood in little need of a razor, Sibthorp was bearded like a pard. Another amusing incident of which O'Connell was the hero was a genial attack on the spur of the moment on Walter, the proprietor of the *Times*. This gentleman was one of the small band of politicians, headed by Lord Stanley, who on Lord Melbourne's accession to power in 1835 formed what was styled the "Neutral" party. The ranks of the party were rapidly depleted as the session wore on, and at length only a few of the original members, Walter being amongst the number, were left, as it were, sitting on the fence. O'Connell one evening, in the course of a debate on the second reading of the Irish Church Bill, made allusion to this fact. Looking on the Ministerial side of the House and not seeing Walter there, he was about to express his regret that he was not in the House, when on



*Drawn by Daniel Maclise, R.A.*

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.

A famous portrait of the great statesman, representing him as the youthful author of "Vivian Grey."

casting his eye on the Opposition side, he observed him sitting in the midst of his "Neutral" friends, on which he exclaimed, in his own inimitable style: "Oh, the honourable member has also gone over! While sitting by himself on this (the Ministerial) side of the House, he was like 'the last rose of summer' (shouts of laughter)—

Like the last rose of summer left blooming alone,  
All its lovely companions being faded and gone."

"It is impossible," says Mr. Grant, who describes the incident, "to convey any idea of the effect which this produced. Mr. Walter's personal friends could not refrain from joining in the loud peals of laughter which burst from all parts of the House, and even he himself enjoyed the harmless but happy raillery."

O'Connell added to his wit a pretty gift of vituperative retort. When attacked in 1837 by Disraeli, whose earlier candidature for High Wycombe in 1832 he had supported, he asserted of his opponent that "he possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died upon the cross, whose name I verily believe must have been Disraeli." Incensed at the language, Disraeli sent a challenge to the Dictator's son, calling upon him to perform "the vicarious duty of yielding satisfaction for the insults which your father has too long lavished with impunity on his political opponents"; but the latter declined the meeting. O'Connell's coarse invective got him into constant hot water in the House. One outbreak in the early part of 1838 drew down upon him the formal censure of the Speaker. At a public meeting in Ireland held at this period the Liberator had inveighed with unrestrained violence against

the action of election committees, asserting that the well-ascertained choice of important constituencies was often set at naught by committee decisions flagrantly irreconcilable with a due observance of that judicious impartiality to which the individuals composing those committees were sworn at the table of the House. The use of the phrase "perjured" in speaking of the committees gave an additional element of offensiveness to the attack, and supplied the motive force for the proceedings which were taken to vindicate the offended honour. After an animated debate the House decided by an overwhelming majority that O'Connell had grievously overstepped the bounds of moderation, and merited and should receive the severe reprimand of the Chair.

The manner in which the rebuke was administered is entertainingly described in a letter by Disraeli to



DANIEL O'CONNELL.

("The Liberator"), the leader of the Irish party in the early Victorian Parliaments.





*Reproduced by permission of the Art Union of London, from their large plate of the picture by Daniel Maclise, R.A.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH AT TILBURY FORT.

One of a series of paintings designed for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament.

his sister, written on March 1st, 1838. "Yesterday," says the vivacious chronicler, whose narrative was doubtless coloured by his not unnatural antipathy to the Irish leader. "O'Connell received his reprimand in one of the most crowded Houses I remember. He entered about 4.30, during the transaction of private business, with his usual air of bustle and indifference; but it was very obvious that his demeanour was affected, as he was so restless that he did not keep in his place for two minutes together. At five o'clock the business commenced. The Speaker inquired whether O'Connell was in attendance, upon which O'Connell announced: 'Yes, sir,' but did not rise. The Speaker, who wore his three-cornered hat, then said: 'Sir, you must stand up.' This rather dashed Dan, who began to feel uneasy, as was very evident, standing like a culprit before several hundred individuals sitting. After all, it is a moral pillory, and I am much mistaken whether Dan did not suffer acutely. The reprimand, considering the politics and physical and intellectual qualities of the reprimanded, was not ineffective. Dan stood like a penitent for a few minutes, then affected to look at some papers, and almost as quickly resumed his attention to the Chair, as if he feared the House would notice his indifference. Then he dropped the paper; then he took it up; then listened again; then took out his spectacles, wiped them, and did not put them on. At last



THOMAS BABINGTON, LORD MACAULAY.  
A portrait of the historian when making his way in Parliament.

it was finished, when he rose and made a very ruffianly acknowledgment; and here the Speaker quite failed, as he ought not to have permitted it."

O'Connell's son, John, gives, in his "Recollections of a Parliamentary Career," a picture of the scene painted from the Irish standpoint. He states that his father, in concluding what Disraeli terms his "ruffianly acknowledgment," said: "I have repented of nothing, I have retracted nothing, I repeat what I have said: I only wish I could find terms less offensive in themselves and equally significant. I am bound to re-assert what I have said, for I am convinced of nothing by a vote." "There was, of course," says John O'Connell, "a terrible outcry at this 'malignancy,' and the whole business would doubtless have had to be done over again—indictment, defence, retrial and all—had not so many other members started up and expressed in pretty unequivocal terms their coincidence with Mr. O'Connell's view of the case, that still greater ridicule would have

fallen upon the elaborate process by which so doubtful a vindication of decisions which, in spite of all the efforts of party, were held by the public mind to be very doubtful in themselves, were to be affected."

Notwithstanding his faults of taste and temper, O'Connell occupied a position of great influence in the House by virtue of his extraordinary talents. Mr. James Grant, in the work previously referred to, gives a glowing description of his remarkable debating powers, assigning him a position in this respect above that of any of his contemporaries. "O'Connell's genius," he said, "ever and anon bursts forth with a brilliancy and effect which are quite overwhelming. You have not well recovered from the overpowering surprise and admiration caused by one of his brilliant effusions when another flashes upon you and produces the same effect. You have no time, nor are you in a position, to weigh the force of his arguments; you are taken captive wherever the speaker chooses to lead you, from beginning to end." "One of the most extraordinary qualities of O'Connell's oratory," adds Mr. Grant, "is the ease and facility with which he can make a transition from one quality to another. I have seen him begin his speech by alluding to topics of an affecting nature, in such a manner as to excite the deepest sympathy towards the sufferers in the mind of the most unfeeling person present. I have seen, in other words, the tear glistening in the eyes of men altogether mused to the melting mood, and in a moment afterwards, by a transition from the grave to the humorous, I have seen the whole audience convulsed with laughter. On the other hand, I have often heard him commence his speech in a strain of the most exquisite humour, and by a sudden transition to deep pathos produce the stillness of death in a place in which but one moment before the air was rent with shouts of laughter."

For several years in the early part of the late Queen's reign, O'Connell continued to fill the Parliamentary and political stage more or less completely. He was one of a half-dozen men in the House who could always command an attentive hearing whatever the occasion of his intervention in debate. A life of strenuous labour in the domain of agitation eventually, however, told on his giant frame. Early in 1846 he fell into such ill-health that he found it difficult to discharge his political duties. His last speech in the House of Commons was

delivered on April 3rd, 1846, under pathetic circumstances, well described by Disraeli in his "Life of Bentinck." The occasion was the adjourned debate on the Irish Coercion Bill. Speaking from the place usually occupied by the Leader of the Opposition, O'Connell submitted an amendment to the motion before the House. "His appearance was of great debility, and the tones of his voice were very still. His words, indeed, only reached those who were immediately around him and the Ministers sitting on the other side of the green table and listening with that interest and respectful attention which became the occasion. It was a strange and touching spectacle to those who remembered the form of colossal energy and the clear and thrilling tones that had once startled, disturbed, and controlled senates. Mr. O'Connell was on his legs for nearly two hours, assisted occasionally in the management of his documents by some devoted aide-de-camp. To the House generally it was a performance in dumb show, a feeble old man muttering before a table; but respect for the great Parliamentary personage kept all as orderly as if the fortunes of a party hung upon his rhetoric; and though not an accent reached the gallery, means were taken that next morning the country should not lose the last and not the least interesting of the speeches of one who has so long occupied and agitated the mind of nations." O'Connell lingered on until the following year, but he never again essayed to address the House.

A genius of a widely different type to O'Connell who also figured prominently in Parliament at this period was Macaulay, to whom brief reference has already been made. The historian, who did nothing by halves, from the outset of his Parliamentary career made up his mind to create a great reputation for himself as a debater; and he brilliantly succeeded in accomplishing his design. His maiden speech, delivered in 1830 on the Jewish Disabilities question, according to Mr. Grant, "electrified the House and called forth the highest compliments to the speaker from men of all parties." It was followed up the next year by a series of masterly contributions to the debates on the Reform question. Jeffreys, his famous colleague on the *Edinburgh Review*, after hearing one of these wrote to Lord Cockburn expressing the opinion that the utterance put Macaulay "at the head of the great speakers, if not the great debaters, of the House." This flattering estimate was confirmed and upheld by subsequent experience. The historian supplied in his person a striking refutation of the commonly accepted theory that a man who was a great writer could not be also a great orator and statesman. He owed his



THOMAS BABINGTON, LORD MACAULAY.

The historian in later life.

Parliamentary triumphs, there can be no doubt, to that immense capacity for taking pains which built up his splendid literary reputation. His speeches were prepared with the utmost care and committed to memory. They were adorned with every literary grace, and when delivered had all the charm which characterises his writings. If instead of succumbing to the blandishments of a lucrative and dignified official career in India he had followed his political bent, almost any position short of the highest might eventually have been his. As things were he left a great name in the annals of Parliament, but he was never absolutely in the front rank.

Many are the descriptions in contemporary political literature of Macanlay's peculiar style of breathless oratory. The most graphic is, perhaps, that contained in the following sketch supplied in Francis's "Orators of the Age": "Seated, he folds his arms and sits in silence, seldom speaking to his colleagues or appearing to notice what is going forward. An opening is made in the discussion, and he rises, or rather darts up from his seat, plunging at once into the very heart of his subject, without exordium or apologetic preface. In fact, you have for a few seconds heard a voice, pitched in alto, monotonous and rather shrill, pouring forth words with inconceivable velocity, ere you have become aware that a new speaker, and one of no common order, has broken in upon the debate. A few seconds more, and cheers—perhaps from all parts of the House—rouse you from your apathy, compelling you to follow that extremely voluble and not very enticing voice in its rapid course through the subject on which the speaker is entering, with a resolute determination, it seems, never to pause. You think of an express train that does not stop even at the chief stations. On, on, he speeds, in full reliance on his own momentum, never stopping for words, never stopping for thoughts, never halting for an instant, even to take breath—his intellect gathering new vigour as he proceeds, handling the subject after him, and all its possible attributes and illustrations with the strength of a giant, leaving a line of light on the pathway his mind has trod, till, unexhausted and apparently inexhaustible, he brings this remarkable effort to a close by a peroration so highly sustained in its declamatory power, so abounding in illustration, so admirably framed to crown and clench the whole oration, that surprise, even if it has begun to wear off, kindles anew, and the hearer is left utterly prostrate and powerless by the whirlwind of ideas and emotions that has swept over him."

Macanlay showed in his oratory that happy gift which so conspicuously distinguishes his writings of making a subject interesting by allusion and anecdote. Indeed, there is a striking resemblance of thought and construction between the two. As Francis puts it, "His speeches read like essays, as his essays read like speeches." An excellent example of his oratorical style is furnished by a speech he delivered in February, 1845, on the new tariff scheme introduced by Sir Robert Peel, by which, while absolutely prohibitory duties were imposed on foreign sugar manufactured by slave labour, raw sugar of similar origin was admitted free. The casuistical distinction was seized hold of by Macanlay for attack. His method was anecdotal. "I remember," said the eminent historian, "something very like the honourable gentleman's morality in a Spanish novel which I read long ago. I beg pardon of the House for detaining them with such a trifle, but the story is much to the purpose. A wandering lad, a sort of Gil Blas, is taken into the service of a rich old silversmith, a most pious man, who is always telling his beads, who hears mass daily, and



SIR THOMAS NOON TALFORD,  
Judge, essayist, and dramatist; the originator of measures in  
Parliament for the security of literary copyright.

observes the feasts and fasts of the Church with the utmost scrupulosity. The silversmith is always preaching honesty and piety. 'Never,' he constantly repeats to his young assistant — 'never touch what is not your own; never take liberties with sacred things.' Sacrilege, as uniting theft with profaneness, is the sin of which he has the deepest horror. One day while he is lecturing after his usual fashion an ill-looking fellow comes into the shop with a sack under his arm. 'Will you buy these?' says the visitor, and produces from the sack some church plate and a rich silver crucifix. 'Buy them!' says the pious man. 'No, nor touch them—not for the world. I know where you got them. Wretch that you are, have you no care for your soul?' 'Well, then,' says the thief, 'if you will not buy them, will you melt them down for me?' 'Melt them down?' answers the silversmith; 'that is quite another matter.' He takes the chalices and the crucifix with a pair of tongs; the silver thus in bond is dropped into the crucible, melted, and delivered to the thief, who pays down five pistoles and decamps with his booty.

The young servant stares at this strange scene; but the master very gravely resumes his lecture. 'My son,' he says, 'take warning by that sacrilegious knave, and take example by me. Think what a load of guilt lies on his conscience! You will see him hanged before long. But as to me, you saw that I would not touch the stolen property. I keep these tongs for such occasions, and thus I thrive in the fear of God, and manage to turn an honest penny.'" The House laughed hugely at Macaulay's whimsical story, and even Peel's severe features relaxed as its application to the subject-matter of the debate became obvious.

To Macaulay belongs the rare honour of having made a speech which turned the balance of voting in the House. The occasion was the second reading of Lord Malton's Copyright Bill, introduced in the session of 1842. In this measure it was sought to extend the copyright of a book to a period twenty-five years after the death of an author. Macaulay, who in the previous session had successfully opposed a similar bill introduced by Serjeant Talfourd, brought forward an alternative scheme giving protection for forty-two years reckoned from the date of publication. His speech in elucidation of his plan was, as his biographer remarks, "as amusing as an essay of Elia, and as convincing as a proof of Euclid." With a wealth of illustration drawn from his well-stored mind he showed that the effect of the bill, if carried, would be to give prolonged protection to some of the worst works of an author, and to afford inadequate protection to the best. On the other hand, his own proposal, if adopted, he maintained would ensure protection to the most valuable of an author's works. "To *Learn*, to *Macbeth*, to *Othello*, to *The Faery Queen*, to *Paradise Lost*, to Bacon's 'Novum Organum' and 'De Augmentis,' to Locke's 'Essay on the Human Understanding,' to Clarendon's 'History,'



*From the painting by Sir T. Lawrence, P.R.A.*

SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART.

*A famous portrait of the great statesman.*



From a mezzotint after the painting by William Bradley.

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

An early portrait of the great Liberal statesman, painted in 1845, while M.P. for Newark.

to Hume's 'History,' to Gibbon's 'History,' to Smith's 'Wealth of Nations,' to Addison's *Spectator*, to almost all the great works of Burke, to 'Clarissa' and 'Sir Charles Grandison,' to 'Joseph Andrews,' 'Tom Jones,' and 'Amelia,' and, with the single exception of 'Waverley,' to all the novels of Sir Walter Scott, I give a longer term of copyright than my noble friend gives. Can he match that list? Does not that list contain what England has produced greatest in many various ways—poetry, philosophy, history, eloquence, wit, skilful portraiture of life and manners? I confidently, therefore, call on the Committee to take my plan in preference to the plan of my noble friend." The speech made a marked impression on the House. At its conclusion Sir Robert Peel walked across the floor and assured Macaulay that it had radically altered his views on the subject. Other important members made a like confession. In fact, it was clearly demonstrated that the closely reasoned arguments of the historian had profoundly altered the situation as it existed at the commencement of the debate. In the result Macaulay's plan was adopted substantially without modification, and "he enjoyed the satisfaction of having framed, according to his mind, a statute which may fairly be described as the charter of his craft, and of having

added to Hansard what are by common consent allowed to be among its most readable pages."<sup>1</sup>

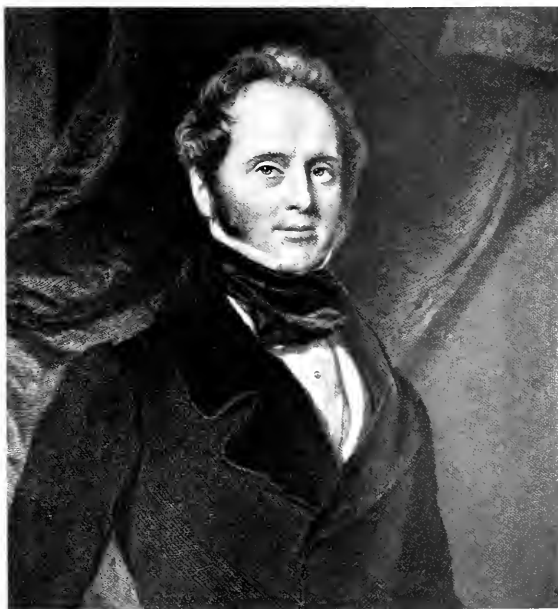
Another of Macaulay's speeches of this period which won even greater celebrity was his criticism of the Maynooth Grant on the second reading of the measure introduced by Sir Robert Peel in 1845. "Was such a feat of legislation ever seen?" asked Macaulay. "And can we wonder that the eager, honest, hot-headed Protestants, who raised you to power in the confident hope that you would curtail the privileges of the Roman Catholics, should stare and grumble when you propose to give public money to the Roman Catholics? Can we wonder that, from one end of the country to the other, everything should be ferment and uproar, that petitions should night after night whiten all our benches like a snowstorm? Can we wonder that the people out of doors should be exasperated by seeing the very men who, when we were in office, voted against the old grant to Maynooth, now pushed and pulled into the House by your whippers-in to vote for an increased grant? The natural consequences follow. All those fierce spirits whom you halloed on to harass us now turn round and begin to worry you. The Orangeman raises his war-whoop; Exeter Hall sets up its bray; Mr. Macneile shudders to see more costly dress than ever provided for the priests of Baal at the table of the Queen; and the Protestant operatives of Dublin call for impeachments in exceedingly bad English. But what did you expect? Did you think when, to serve your turn, you call the Devil up, that it was as easy to lay him as to raise him."

Macaulay's outspoken utterances on this occasion had far-reaching results for him personally. His phrase, "The bray of Exeter Hall," caused deep offence to his constituents, and it was one

<sup>1</sup> Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay."

of the contributory causes, if not, indeed, the chief, which brought about his defeat at Edinburgh in 1847. There was a likelihood at the time that the rebuff, so humiliating to one of Macaulay's proud nature, would have led to his complete retirement from political life. But five years later the Edinburgh people voluntarily undertaking to make amends for their previous harsh conduct, the historian stood again and was returned at the head of the poll. During the few remaining years of his Parliamentary life he made some notable contributions to debates in the House. What he himself regards as his "very best speech" was one delivered in 1853 on the factory question. In this he made effective use of the analogy of the Sunday to defend the principle of regulating the hours of labour. "Man," he said—"man is the great instrument that produces wealth. The natural difference between Campania and Spitzbergen is trifling when compared with the difference between a country inhabited by men full of bodily and mental vigour and a country inhabited by men sunk in bodily and mental decrepitude. Therefore it is that we are not poorer, but richer, because we have rested from our labour one day in seven. That day is not lost. While industry is suspended, while the plough lies in the furrow, while the Exchange is silent, while no smoke ascends from the factory, a process is going on quite as important to the wealth of nations as any process which is performed on more busy days. Man, the machine of machines, the machine compared with which all the contrivances of the Watts and the Arkwrights are worthless, is repairing and winding up, so that he returns to his labours on the Monday with clever intellect, with livelier spirits, with renewed corporal vigour. Never will I believe that what makes a population stronger, and healthier, and wiser, and better, can ultimately make it poorer. You try to frighten us by telling us that in some German factories the young work seventeen hours in the twenty-four; that they work so hard that among thousands there is not one who grows to such a stature that he can be admitted into the army; and you ask whether, if we pass this bill, we can possibly hold our own against such competition as this. Sir, I laugh at the thought of such competition. If ever we are forced to yield the foremost place among commercial nations, we shall yield it, not to a race of degenerate dwarfs, but to some people pre-eminently vigorous in body and mind."

Though Macaulay had in a marked degree what is familiarly known as "the ear of the House," he never commanded that power over its emotions which was wielded by its greatest orators. Members listened to him with eager attention, and occasionally, as in the case of the copyright speech, deferred to his views; but they were hardly stirred by him. Francis, in his discriminating sketch, attributes this partial failure to Macaulay's



HENRY JOHN TEMPLE, THIRD VISCOUNT PALMERSTON, K.G.  
One of the greatest of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers.

"inveterate habit of preparing his speeches, even to the very words and phrases, and committing them to memory long before the hour of delivery." Some opinions of members of the Press Gallery, cited by Sir George Trevelyan, strengthen the view that undue elaboration diminished the oratorical effectiveness of the great man's utterances, and though the biographer endeavours with some success to show that there was considerably less of preparation than the world supposed, it is unquestionable that the prevailing impression created was that of a lack of spontaneity and earnestness in his vigorous rhetoric. When, however, the worst has been said of the speeches, they will remain with Burke's orations amongst the most fascinating contributions to the store of Parliamentary erudition.

Contemporaneously with the Parliamentary experiences of Macaulay was passed the political apprenticeship of one who, having made a great reputation in the domain of literature, was to achieve an even more illustrious position in the field of statesmanship. It scarcely needs to be stated that the reference is to Benjamin Disraeli. Of all the strange figures which flit across the stage at Westminster his, perhaps, is the strangest and most romantic. Jewish by birth—an alien, as his political enemies were too prone to call him—destitute of the family connections which had been the dower of many great statesmen of an earlier day, with strong prejudices to fight against and bitter rivalries and jealousies to overcome, he with a steadfastness of purpose and a political prescience which amounted almost to an inspiration forged his way to the topmost rung of the ladder of fame, leaving behind him finally a name which ranks with the greatest in Parliamentary history.

An oft-told but ever-engrossing tale is that of Disraeli's first speech in the House of



GEORGE HAMILTON GORDON, FOURTH EARL OF ABERDEEN, K.G.,  
Foreign Secretary in 1828 under the Duke of Wellington, and again in 1841 under Sir  
Robert Peel; head of the Coalition Ministry of 1852.

Commons. Young and politically inexperienced, but with a confident belief in his own powers, he had taken his seat on the opening of the first Parliament of Queen Victoria on November 20th, 1837, as member for Maidstone. His fame as a novelist had then been established beyond the power of detractor, but sweet as the incense of literary success was, it did not satisfy his ambitious nature. Political distinction was the goal of his aspirations, as perhaps it had ever been from the time he had reached manhood. With ill-concealed impatience he waited the opportunity of making an effective *début*. It came, or he thought it did, on December 7th, in a debate on a question arising out of some Irish election petitions. Earlier there had been a sharp passage of arms between Sir Francis Boddett and O'Connell. The former had accused the Liberator of encouraging assassination, and said that there were many people then living in Ireland under a system of terrorism "more powerful and terrible than that which existed under Robespierre in France." Not to be outdone in vituperation, O'Connell, after

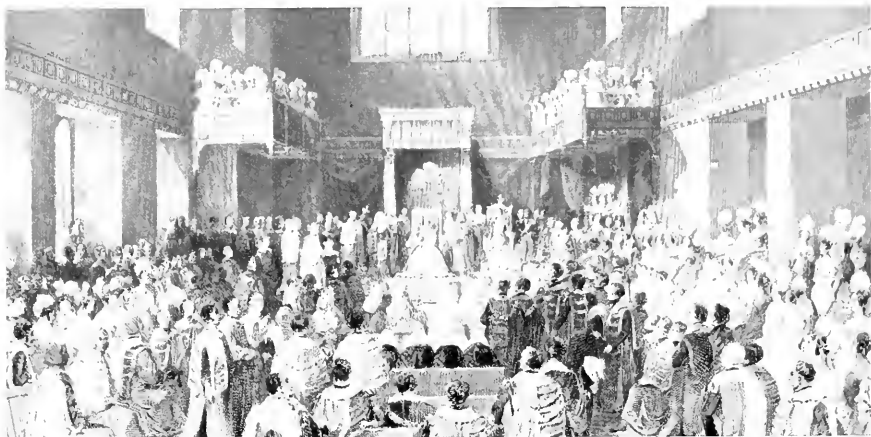




From a drawing by T. Watts, W. & A. R. I.

DISRAELI'S FIRST SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at last. Ay, sir, though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me."



THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY QUEEN VICTORIA IN 1843.

entering into a defence of his position as a political leader, and mentioning that he had foregone judicial preferment in order to continue his independent career, concluded with the words, "Is it for that sacrifice that I am now vilified and traduced by an old renegade." It was at this juncture that Disraeli stepped into the breach. He was a strikingly handsome young man, somewhat of a dandy in his dress, and with an air of easy grace which bespoke more than a passing acquaintance with salons. When he arose, as he did the instant that O'Connell resumed his seat, all eyes were turned towards him in eager curiosity, as, apart from the personal enmity known to exist between him and the Irish leader, there was the *début* of one of the most popular and fashionable writers of the day to stimulate interest. His speech, which commenced with the customary apology for indulgence on the plea of inexperience, opened quietly enough, but it was speedily made clear that he was not to have fair play. A reference to O'Connell provoked interruption, and there were jeers when he went on to say that he did not "affect to be insensible to the difficulty of my position." They were renewed when he professed his anxiety to bring the subject of the debate back to the proper point. "I wish," said Disraeli, "I really could induce the House to give me five minutes more (roars of laughter). I stand here to-night, sir—(here the noise in the House became so general that the honourable gentleman could not proceed for some time; when the confusion had somewhat subsided he said:)—I stand here to-night, sir, not formally, but in some degree virtually, the representative of a considerable number of members of Parliament (bursts of laughter). Now, why smile? continued laughter). Why envy me? (here the laughter became loud and general). Why should I not have a tale to unfold to-night? (roars of laughter). Do you forget that band of a hundred and fifty-eight members—those ingenious and inexperienced youths to whose unsophisticated minds the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in those tones of winning pathos—(excessive laughter and loud cries of 'Question!')."

So the interruptions continued, the speaker meanwhile battling manfully on, determined, if possible, to secure a hearing. The report—that of the *Morning Chronicle* of December 8th, 1837—proceeds: "If honourable members think it is fair to interrupt me, I will submit (great laughter). I would not act so towards any one, that is all I can say (laughter, and cries of 'Go on!'). But I beg simply to ask—('Oh!' and loud laughter). Nothing is so easy as to laugh (roars of laughter). I really wish to place before the House what is our position. When we remember all this—when we remember that in spite of the support of the honourable and learned gentleman the member for Dublin and his well-disciplined phalanx of patriots, and, in spite of this, we remember the amatory eclogue—(roars of laughter)—the old

loves and the new loves, that took place between the noble lord the Tityrus of the Treasury Bench and the learned Daphne of Liskeard—(loud laughter and cries of ‘Question’)—which appeared as a fresh instance of the *amoris reintegration*—(excessive laughter)—when we remember at the same time that with emancipated Ireland and enslaved England on the one hand a triumphant nation, on the other a groaning people, and notwithstanding the noble lord, secure on the pedestal of power, may wield in one hand the keys of St. Peter, and—

“At this juncture,” proceeds the veracious chronicle, “the honourable member was interrupted with such loud and incessant bursts of laughter that it was impossible to know whether he really closed his sentence or not.” Then came that historic incident with its prophetic declaration which will ever be associated with the great statesman’s entrance upon the Parliamentary stage. “At last,” says Mr. James Grant, “losing all temper, which until then he had preserved in a wonderful manner, he paused in the middle of a sentence, and looking the Liberals indignantly in the face, raised his hands and opened his mouth as wide as its dimensions would permit, and said in remarkably loud and almost terrific tones: ‘I am not at all surprised at the reception which I have received. I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at last. Ay, sir, and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me.’”

Despite his brave words Disraeli was intensely mortified at the unmannerly reception he had received. Mr. Grant describes him as presenting “the very picture of a disappointed man,” sitting for the remainder of the evening scarcely exchanging a word with any one. Disraeli’s own view was that his *début* was a failure, but that the failure was not caused by any shortcomings on his part, but from the physical powers of his adversaries. “I can give you no idea,” he says in a letter to his sister written the day after the delivery of the speech, “how bitter, how factions, how unfair they were, and that was like my first *début* at Aylesbury, and perhaps in that sense may be auspicious of ultimate triumph in the same scene. I fought through all with undaunted pluck and unruffled temper, made occasionally good isolated hits when there was silence, and finished with spirit when I found a formal display was ineffectual. My party backed me well, and no one with more zeal and kindness than Peel—cheering me repeatedly, which is not his custom. In the Lobby at the division Chandos, who was not near me while speaking, came up and congratulated me. I replied that I thought there was no cause for congratulations, and muttered ‘Failure!’ ‘No such thing,’ said Chandos; ‘you are quite wrong. I have just seen Peel, and I said to him, “Now tell me exactly what you think of D.” Peel replied, “Some of my party were disappointed and talk of failure: I say *just the reverse*. He did all that he could do under the circumstances. I say anything but failure; he must make his way.”’” Peel’s instinct was sound. Before many years had elapsed Disraeli had shown beyond cavil his genius for political warfare, and shown it, curiously enough, at Peel’s expense. But this is a story which must be left for treatment in another chapter.



After the picture by Chalon.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

An early portrait.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### *THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTS (continued).*

THE year 1846 brought to a close an agitation which had been carried on throughout the country for a long period under the auspices of the Anti-Corn Law League, a body founded at Manchester for the purpose of abolishing the import duty on wheat, and thereby enabling the whole population to obtain cheaper bread. Charles Pelham Villiers, Richard Cobden, and John Bright are names that will ever be remembered in connection with this great movement. All were typical middle-class Englishmen, and they fought the battle with a dogged perseverance worthy of the cause. But to Sir Robert Peel is due the credit of actually giving legislative effect to the determination of the majority of people. This great man's career has already been touched upon. As was eloquently expressed by his distinguished son, Lord Peel, he was "a statesman whose history and whose labours are identified with the story and debates of this House; whose public services are indelibly written in the records of his country; and whose name is warmly cherished in a multitude of British homes."

For more than half a century the restrictions on the importation of wheat had been keenly felt, and from time to time the subject was dealt with in a small way, the final concession a few years previous to 1846 being a sliding scale duty of 1s. to 21 per quarter, according to the market value. Eventually, Sir Robert Peel, hitherto the trusted leader of the Protectionist party, became convinced of the justice of the cry for abolition of the duty, and he succeeded in 1846, in spite of the violent opposition of many of his own supporters, in passing into law that measure with which his name is so closely connected and which resulted in the total extinction of the import duty on corn and in the ultimate adoption of the general policy of Free Trade.

The development of Peel's Free Trade policy was marked by fierce and acrimonious debates in the Commons, and by personal attacks upon the statesman by his old associates, who regarded him as the



RICHARD COBDEN, M.P.

One of the principal leaders of the Free Trade movement.

betrayer of their interests. Foremost in the fray throughout these bitter controversies was Disraeli, who, earlier a faithful follower and admirer of Peel, now became his sleepless and unrelenting antagonist. It is not necessary for our purposes to inquire whether this change of front was due to genuine public spirit, or whether, as some writers represent, to personal feeling arising out of Peel's neglect of Disraeli in forming his Administration. But it is to be noted that the open antagonism between the two was shown before the statesman took his final plunge, and arose over matters which were not connected with the fiscal question which was shortly to become the burning controversy of the day.

There was a particularly sharp passage of arms in the session of 1845 over the historic episode of the opening of Mazzini's letters. Disraeli attacked Peel with violence, describing him as displaying "unusual warmth,"

and observing that it by no means followed that he felt what he expressed. "The right honourable baronet," he remarked, "has too great a mind, and feels too eminent a position, ever to lose his temper; but in a popular assembly it is sometimes expedient to enact the part of the choleric gentleman. The right honourable gentleman touched the redbox with emotion. I know from old experience that when one first enters the House these exhibitions are rather alarming; and I believe that some of the younger members were much frightened; but I would advise them not to be terrified. I will tell them that the right honourable baronet will not eat them up—will not even resign; the very worst thing he will do will be to tell them to rescind a vote." The next night Sir Robert Peel replied to the attack. "Notwithstanding the provocation of the honourable gentleman," he said, "I will not deal so harshly with him as he has dealt with me. He undertakes to assure the House that my vehemence was all pretended and warmth all simulated. I, on the contrary, will do him entire justice; I do believe that his bitterness was not simulated, but that it was entirely sincere. . . . The honourable gentleman is at perfect liberty to give a direct support to a hostile motion, but all I ask is, that when he gives that support to the motion, let him not say that he does it in a friendly spirit.

Give me the avowed, erect, and manly foe  
Firm I can meet, perhaps can turn the blow;  
But of all plagues, good Heaven, thy wrath can send,  
Save, O save me, from a candid friend.



*From the painting by Walter William Oakes, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.*

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.

The eminent statesman and orator.

Here we meet in debate with our opponents opposite. We enter into conflict with them, mutually attacking and repelling attack *adverso fronte*. When engaged in that conflict it is certainly not very convenient, though it may be unavoidable, to have a blow aimed at your right flank that you did not expect." Disraeli was not discomfited by this sharp attack. A few nights later—on February 28th—he crossed swords again with the Premier. "If," he said, "the right honourable gentleman may find it sometimes convenient to reprove a supporter on his right flank—perhaps we deserve it—I for one am quite prepared to bow the rod; but really, if the right honourable gentleman, instead of having recourse to obloquy, would stick to quotation, he may rely on it it would be a safer weapon. It is one he always wields with the hand of a master; and when he does appeal to any authority in prose and verse, he is sure to be successful, partly because he seldom quotes a passage that has not properly received the meed of Parliamentary approbation, and partly and principally because his quotations are so happy. The right honourable gentleman knows

what the introduction of a great name does in debate—how important is its effect and occasionally how electrical. He never refers to any author who is not great, and sometimes who is not loved—Canning for instance. That is a name never to be mentioned, I am sure, in the House of Commons without emotion. We all admire his genius; we all, at least most of us, deplore his untimely end; and we all sympathise with him in his fierce struggle with supreme prejudice and sublime mediocrity—with inveterate foes and with 'candid friends.' The right honourable gentleman may be sure that a quotation from such an authority will always tell—some lines, for example, upon friendship written by Mr. Canning, and quoted by the right honourable gentleman! The theme, the poet, the speaker—what a felicitous combination! Its effect in debate must be overwhelming; and I am sure that were it addressed to me, all that would remain for me would be thus publicly to congratulate the right honourable gentleman, not only on his ready memory, but on his courageous conscience." To properly appreciate the biting sarcasm of the speaker it is necessary to recall Peel's treatment of Canning when that statesman assumed the Premiership on Lord Liverpool's illness. Peel then refused his support under circumstances which were considered at the time to reflect upon his fidelity to a political associate.

Peel, replying to Disraeli's gibes, expressed the hope that the latter, "having discharged the accumulated virus of the last week," now felt more at his ease than he was. But he would not condescend to "reciprocate personalities" with his critic. He would merely remark upon the strangeness of the fact that Disraeli's mind had by an accidental quotation suddenly and for the first time awakened to the enormity of his (Peel's) conduct.

These interchanges of courtesies were but the preliminary to the battle royal which was to be waged between the two over the question of Free Trade. On March 17th, on a motion for the allotment of a portion of the surplus to the relief of the agricultural interest, Disraeli unmasked his guns. He contrasted Peel's strong Protectionist utterances when in opposition with his then partial attitude to the cause of Free Trade. "There is no doubt," he said, "a great difference in the right honourable gentleman's demeanour as Leader of the Opposition and as Minister of the Crown. But that's the old story: you must not contrast too strongly the hours of courtship with the years of possession. 'Tis very true that the right honourable gentleman's conduct is different. I remember him making his Protection speeches. They were



THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING, M.P.

One of the later portraits of the great statesman.

the best speeches I ever heard. It was a great thing to hear the right honourable gentleman say, 'I would sooner be the leader of the gentlemen of England than possess the confidence of sovereigns.' That was a grand thing. We don't hear much of 'the gentlemen of England' now. But what of that? They have the pleasures of memory, the charms of reminiscences. They were his first love, and though he may not kneel to them now as in the hour of passion, still they can recall the past; and nothing is more useless and unwise than these scenes of crimination and reproach, for we know that in all these cases, when the beloved object has ceased to charm, it is in vain to appeal to the feelings." Concluding his speech, Disraeli said: "For my part, if we are to have Free Trade, I, who honour genius, prefer that such measures should be proposed by the honourable member for Stockport (Cobden), than by one who, through skilful Parliamentary manœuvres, has tampered with the generous confidence of a great people and a great party. For myself, I care not what may be the result. Dissolve, if you please, the Parliament that you have betrayed, and appeal to the people, who, I believe, mistrust you. For me there remains this at least—the opportunity of expressing thus publicly my belief that a Conservative Government is an Organised Hypocrisy." Peel retorted on his assailant by quoting some Disraelian speeches delivered in 1842, eulogistic of Peel's fiscal policy, and by contemptuously remarking that he then held in the same estimation the panegyric with which he now regarded the attack. The long-drawn duel was resumed later in the session when Peel introduced his bill increasing the grant to the Maynooth College. Disraeli savagely attacked Peel's statesmanship as evidenced by his treatment of this question. He described him as "the Parliamentary middleman"—"a man who bamboozles one party and plunders the other till, having obtained a position to which he is not entitled, he cries out: 'Let us have no party questions, but fixity of tenure.'" Bringing his speech to a close, he remarked: "Let us in this House re-echo that which I believe to be the sovereign sentiment of this country; let us tell persons in high places that cunning is not caution, and that habitual perfidy is not high policy of State. . . . Let us bring back to this House that which it has for so long a time past been without—the legitimate influence and salutary check of a constitutional Opposition. That is what the country requires, what the country looks for. Let us do it at once in the only way in which it can be done, by dethroning this dynasty of deception, by putting an end to the intolerable yoke of official despotism and Parliamentary imposture."

Disraeli's attacks reached their culminating point in the session of 1846, when the bill for the abolition of the Corn Laws was introduced and carried. His first, and in some respects his greatest, speech was delivered in the debate on the address



THE HON. CHARLES PELHAM VILLIERS, M.P.,

A prominent leader in the Corn Law Repeal agitation. He was for some years "Father of the House of Commons" before he died.

after Peel had unfolded his policy. After the statesman had spoken, there was a momentary pause, which seemed to indicate that serious issue was not to be joined that evening. Disraeli, however, perceived his opportunity, and he took it. Rising in his seat, he, amid the rousing cheers of the discontented Protectionists, denounced the Ministerial policy with an adroitness which showed beyond cavil his great qualities as a political leader. It has been suggested by a popular historian that but for this intervention on Disraeli's part Peel's Protectionist following might never have gone into open revolt. But great as the speech was, and still greater the genius which inspired its delivery at the particular juncture it was delivered, it can hardly have exercised that remarkable influence. What, however, it undoubtedly did do was to give cohesiveness to the disaffected ranks, and personally to elevate Disraeli to the position of the mouthpiece of the party, and one of its principal leaders. Throughout this memorable session the fight was maintained, with Disraeli as the principal champion of the abandoned creed. It was a losing battle, but it was fought with a spirit and a resolution which had seldom been equalled in similar circumstances. Disraeli's final speech on the third reading of the bill on May 15th was a striking piece of declamatory oratory. "Even now," he said—"even now, in this last scene of the drama, when the party whom he unintentionally betrayed is to be unintentionally annihilated—even now the right honourable gentlemen, faithful to the law of his being, is

going to pass a project which I believe it is matter of notoriety is not of his own invention. It is one which may have been modified, but which I believe has been offered to another Government, and by that Government has been wisely rejected. Why, sir, these are matters of general notoriety. After the day that the right honourable gentleman made his first exposition of his schemes, a gentleman well known to the House, and learned in all the political secrets behind the scenes, met me and said: 'Well, what do you think of your chief's plan?' Not knowing exactly what to say, but taking up a phrase which has been much used in the House, I observed: 'Well, I suppose it is a great and comprehensive plan.' 'Oh!' he replied, 'we know all about it; it was offered to us. It was not his plan; it's Popham's plan.' And is England to be governed by Popham's plan? Will he go to the country with it? Will he go with it to that ancient and famous England that once was governed by statesmen—by Burleighs and by Walsinghams, by Bolingbrokes and by Walpoles, by a Chatham and a Canning. Will he go to it with this fantastic scheme of some presumptuous pedant? I won't believe it. I have that confidence in the common sense, I will say the common spirit, of our country-



Lord William George Cavendish Bentinck, M.P. (Known as Lord George Bentinck).

Leader of the Protectionist party in the House of Commons after the adoption of Free Trade principles by Sir Robert Peel.





*From a drawing by T. Walter Wilson, R.I.*

**THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN 1846.**

Sir Robert Peel announcing his conversion to Free Trade principles during the Corn Law debate, January 22nd.



JOHN ARTHUR ROEBUCK, M.P.

("Old Tear'em"), many years member for Sheffield.

public man can give of confidence in the honour and integrity of a Minister of the Crown."

These not too elevating personal controversies between Peel and Disraeli were protracted for some time longer, and though they added to the excitement aroused by the debate, they had little effect on the fate of the Repeal Bill. On May 15th the measure passed its third reading by a majority of ninety-eight. Peel's triumph was short-lived. The disaffected sections, discomfited on the main issue, sought by a side wind to accomplish their purpose. They joined forces on an Irish Coercion Bill which had been introduced earlier in the session. With unexampled virulence, Peel was attacked by Lord George Bentinck, the Protectionist, leader, and by Disraeli. For controversial purposes the old story of Peel's ill-treatment of Canning was revived, and there were long and acrimonious debates on points raised in this connection of a purely personal interest. Peel held his ground well against the attacking party, and satisfactorily vindicated himself from the charge of treachery to Canning. But he could not altogether remove the effect produced by the efforts of the adroit and tireless tactician who was pitted against him. A speech delivered by Disraeli on June 15th on the third night of the debate on the Irish Coercion Bill was particularly damaging. In this he went exhaustively into the question of Peel's relations with Canning, and, concluding, said: "I ask the right honourable gentleman why Ireland was his great difficulty, and whether, if he had acted with frankness to Mr. Canning in reference to his communication with Lord Liverpool in 1823, Ireland would have been his great difficulty. This the right honourable gentleman must feel at the present moment, when we are about again to divide on an Irish question—a division which may be fatal to the continuance of his power. It is Nemesis that inspires this debate and dictates this division, and seals with the stigma of Parliamentary reprobation the catastrophe of a sinister career." Peel was manifestly shaken by this attack. He arose "confused and suffering." He said he had no right to reply, but continued to make deprecatory and feeble observations. Finally, he called upon the House "to suspend their judgment until an opportunity for reply came."<sup>1</sup> Five days later he delivered a full reply to the criticisms and

men, and I believe they will not long endure this huckstering tyranny of the Treasury Bench—those political pedlars that bought their party in the cheapest market and sold us in the dearest."

Sir Robert Peel, in his reply to this vigorous speech, said it would be offering an insult to the country if he were to condescend to bandy personalities on such an occasion. He foresaw that the course which he had taken from a sense of public duty would, as its inevitable result, lead to the forfeiting of friendships which he most highly valued; "but," he went on, "the smallest of all the penalties which I anticipated were the continued venomous attacks of the member for Shrewsbury." Afterwards he remarked that it was strange that if his character was what Disraeli had described it, that politician should have been so ready to give him his support in 1841. "It is still more surprising," proceeded Peel, "that he should have been ready, as I think he was, to unite his fortunes with mine in office, thus implying the strongest proof which any

<sup>1</sup> Disraeli's "Life of Bentinck."



*Reproduced by permission of the Art Union of London from their large plots of the pictures by Daniel Maclise, R.A.*

ADMIRAL BLAKE BEFORE TUNIS.

One of a series of paintings designed for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament.

charges made in Disraeli's speech, but it was then too late to remove the injurious effect that had been created. When on Thursday, June 25th, the division was taken on the second reading of the Coercion Bill, there was a strong coalition of forces inimical to the Minister, with the result that he was defeated by 292 votes to 219—a majority of seventy-three. It was a strange division. Disraeli hits off its most striking characteristics in his picturesque way in his "Life of Bentinck": "More than a hundred Protectionist members followed the Minister; more than eighty avoided the division—a few of these, however, had paired; nearly the same number followed Lord George Bentinck. But it was not merely their numbers that attracted the anxious observation of the Treasury Bench as the Protectionists passed in defile before the Minister to the hostile Lobby. It was impossible that he could have marked them without emotion; the flower of that great party which had been so proud to follow one who had been so proud to lead them. They were men to gain whose hearts and the hearts of their fathers had been the aim and exultation of his life. They had extended to him an unlimited confidence and an admiration without stint. They stood by him in the darkest hour, and had borne him from the depths of despair to the proudest of living positions. Right or wrong, they were men of honour, breeding, and refinement, high and generous character, great weight and station in the country, which they had ever placed at his disposal. They had been not

only his followers, but his friends; had joined in the same pleasures, drunk from the same cup, and in the pleasantness of private life had often forgotten together the cares and strife of politics. . . . When Prince Metternich was informed at Dresden with great ostentation that the Emperor had arrived, 'Yes—but without his army,' was the reply. Sir Robert Peel was still First Minister of England as Napoleon remained Emperor for a while after Moscow. . . . The news that the Government were not only beaten, but by a majority so large as seventy-three, began to circulate. An incredulous murmur passed it along the Treasury Bench. 'They say we are beaten by seventy-three,' whispered the most important member of the Cabinet in a tone of surprise to Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert Peel did not reply or even turn his head. He looked very grave and extended his chin, as was his habit when annoyed, and cared not to speak. He began to comprehend his position and that the Emperor was without his army."

After the defeat on the Coercion Bill there was no alternative left to the Ministry but to resign. They were the less concerned at this necessity as on the very night that the adverse vote had been registered the Repeal Bill had passed its final stage in the House of Lords by a substantial majority. Peel, in a speech announcing his retirement, paid a tribute to Richard Cobden, whom he described as "a man acting from pure and disinterested motives, with untiring energy, and who by appeals to reason enforced the necessity of the measures with an eloquence the more to be admired because unaffected and unadorned, and whose name ought to be associated with their success." And speaking of himself, Peel in exalted language described his feeling with relation to the last act of his official career. "I shall leave a name execrated by every monopolist, who, from less honourable motives, clamours for Protection because it conduces to his own individual benefit; but it may be that I shall

leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good-will in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened by the sense of injustice." This speech marked the close of Peel's official life. But until he met with his untimely end by a fall from his horse on Constitution Hill on June 21st, 1850, he continued a distinguished and respected member of the House.

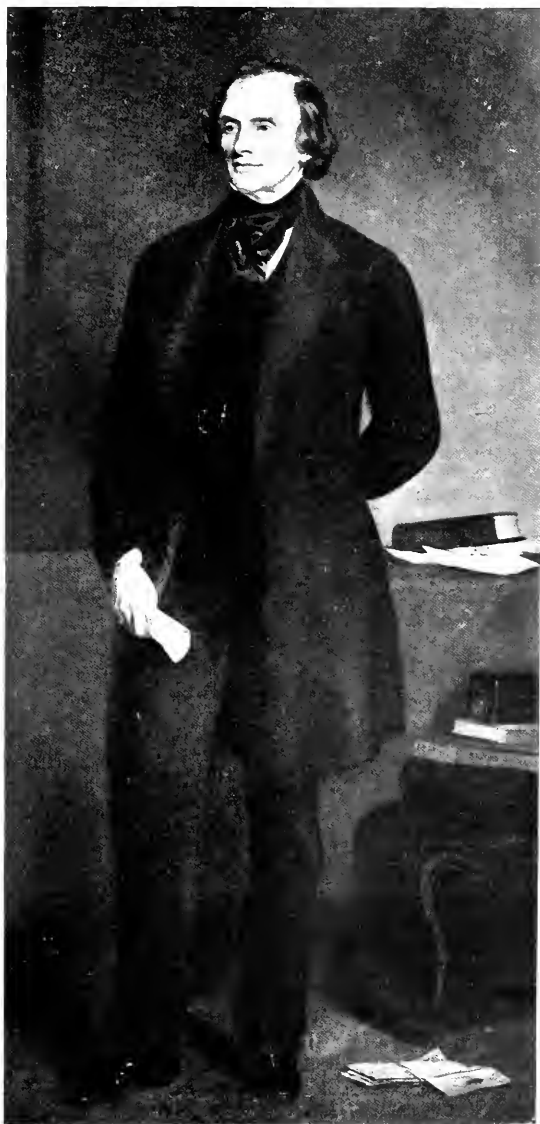
The collapse of the Peel Ministry left parties in a great state of confusion. Riven in twain by the Free Trade question, the Conservatives sat on opposite sides of the House—the Protectionists sharing the Liberal benches with the Whigs and



*From the painting by E. W. Pocklington, R.A.*

HENRY PELHAM, FOURTH DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, K.G.

Radicals, and the Peelites taking their place on the Opposition benches. Lord John Russell, upon whom the Premiership now devolved, endeavoured with but indifferent success to conduct the Administration amid these curiously conflicting elements. It was not long before the Protectionists drifted into an attitude of hostility, and in the session of 1847 their position as antagonists of the Ministry was formally marked by their taking their seats on the Opposition benches. Disraeli continued, as in the later period of the Peel Administration, to take a conspicuous part in the direction of the Protectionist policy, and when Lord George Bentinck died suddenly on September 28th, 1848, he was recognised as his successor in the leadership. With consummate skill he directed for the next few years the fortunes of the party, prosecuting meanwhile that system of education which was to create out of the sturdy and uncompromising Toryism of the opponents of Corn Law Repeal that compact body of progressive Conservative opinion which was in the not distant future to have a dominating influence in the direction of national affairs. His attacks on the Ministry ranged over a wide field, and though his most effective work was done in the domain of domestic and fiscal policy, he did not neglect the Government's conduct of foreign affairs, which, in Lord Palmerston's masterful hands, supplied many openings for criticism. On June 17th, 1850, a vote of censure on the policy of the Foreign Secretary was carried in the House of Lords, and Disraeli was urged by Lord John Russell to submit a similar vote in the House of Commons in order that the opinion of the popular



*From the painting by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A. in the National Portrait Gallery.*

JOHN, FIRST EARL RUSSELL, K.G.

Better known as Lord John Russell. This picture was painted in 1854.



From a drawing by George Richmond, R.A.

SIDNEY HERBERT.

Colonial Secretary in Lord Palmerston's first, and War Secretary in his second, Administration.

from indignity when he could say, '*Civis Romanus sum*,' so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong."

Palmerston's vindication of his policy was regarded as complete and convincing, and the debate left the Government, so far as the external affairs of the country were affected, stronger than ever. It was in its home administration that the Conservative Opposition found the opportunity which at last brought them success and gave to Disraeli his first Ministerial preferment. On February 11th, 1852, a motion for the relief of agricultural distress submitted from the Opposition benches was rejected only by the small majority of fourteen in a full House. This moral victory for the Opposition was followed on February 20th by the real triumph of the carrying against the Government of a motion for the reduction of the franchise by the overwhelming majority of one hundred and sixty-two. On February 24th Lord John Russell announced the resignation of the Ministry. After a fruitless attempt by Lord Stanley to form a Government, Lord John Russell resumed the direction of affairs with his old colleagues, but it was soon made clear by further defeats in the House of Commons that his position was an untenable one. A serious rupture between the Premier and Palmerston, culminating in the latter's dismissal from office, was the final determining factor in the business. Defeated on an amendment proposed by Lord Palmerston to a

chamber might be tested. Disraeli, however, like a good tactician, declined to commit himself to a course which he knew would result in a vote favourable to Ministers. It was left to Roebuck to raise the question. The action of this politician led to a prolonged debate, in which Palmerston made a memorable speech. He spoke for several hours, "from the dusk of a summer evening to the dawn of a summer morning." In concluding his oration he gave utterance to some sentences which have become historic. "I fearlessly challenge," he said, "the verdict which this House, as representing a political, a commercial, a constitutional country, is to give on the question now brought before it—whether the principles on which the foreign policy of her Majesty's Government has been conducted, and the sense of duty which has led us to think ourselves bound to afford protection to our fellow-subjects abroad, are proper and fitting guides for those who are charged with the government of England; and whether, as the Roman in days of old held himself free



From a drawing by George Richmond, R.A.

EARL GRANVILLE.

A prominent Liberal statesman who filled the offices of Foreign Secretary in Gladstone's 1868 and 1880 Administrations, and of Colonial Secretary in his 1868 and 1880 Administrations.





*Portrait by Sir John Everett Millais*

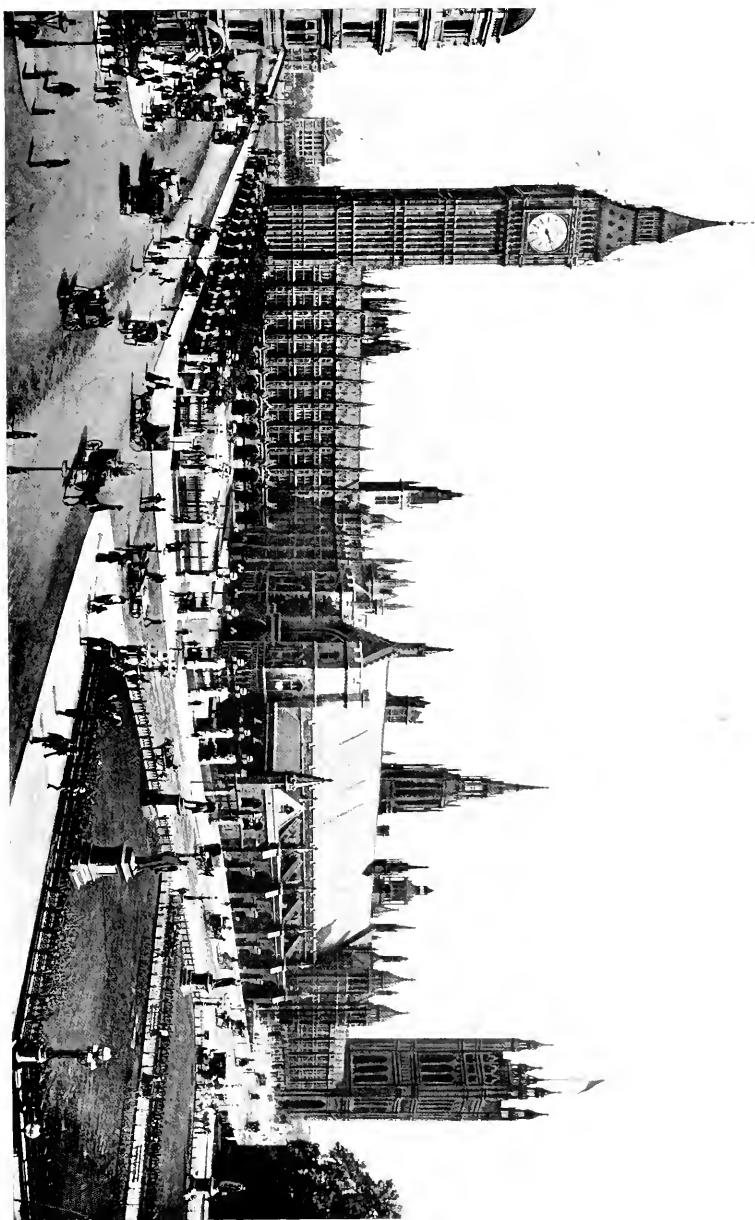
*1855*

*Portrait by Sir John Everett Millais*

# BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, KG.

Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield, was born on 21st December 1804, at 10, Bedford Square, London. He was the youngest of four children of Isaac Disraeli, a Jewish banker, and Jane, daughter of a Jewish banker. He was educated at Eton College and at Trinity College, Oxford. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1829 to 1852, and was created Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876. He was a member of the House of Lords from 1876 to 1881. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1829 to 1852, and was created Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876. He was a member of the House of Lords from 1876 to 1881. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1829 to 1852, and was created Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876. He was a member of the House of Lords from 1876 to 1881.





*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

# THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND WESTMINSTER HALL, AS SEEN FROM PARLIAMENT SQUARE.

The railings in the left foreground enclose New Palace Yard. Old Palace Yard is the space at the western end of Westminster Hall on the extreme right of the picture.

bill brought in by Lord John Russell for the establishment of a militia force, the Government withdrew the measure, and a few days later—on February 23rd—the resignation of Ministers was formally announced. Lord Stanley, now the Earl of Derby, was called upon to form a new Administration. He accepted the duty, and with Disraeli as his Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Leader of the House of Commons sought to carry on the government of the country with the unstable elements to his hand. The Ministerial position, precarious from the first, was not strengthened by the general elections which took place in the late summer. When the new Parliament met on November 11th, it had to face a formidable array of hostile forces



*Reproduction of the painting of the Execution of Montrose, by the painter, J. M. W. Turner, R.S.A.*

#### THE EXECUTION OF MONTROSE.

One of a series of paintings designed for the decoration of the new House of Parliament. It figures on the wall of the corridor leading from the Central Hall to the Lobby.

in a coalition of the Liberals and the Peelites. Disraeli was joined on the Budget, which was introduced by Disraeli on December 4th in an able speech which occupied five hours in delivery. The Ministerial proposals were hotly assailed. Whigs, Radicals, and Peelites united in uncompromisingly condemning them. Disraeli defended himself with characteristic skill. Carrying the war into the enemy's camp, he assailed the combination which had been formed against him. "Yes," he remarked, "I know what I have to face. I have to face a coalition. The combination may be successful. A coalition has before this been successful. But coalitions, though successful, have always found this—that their triumph has been brief. This, too, I know that England does not love coalitions. I appeal from the coalition to that public opinion which governs this country—to that public opinion whose mild and irresistible



*From a drawing by George Richmond, R.A.*

GEORGE DOUGLAS CAMPBELL, EIGHTH DUKE OF ARGYLL, K.G.,

Secretary for India in Mr. Gladstone's first Administration.

and aims were different; their pursuits led them into different paths. Moreover, in the character of each was a strongly marked egotism—if you will a consciousness of power—which, quite apart from divergence of political views, forbade intimate association. For some time prior to the period with which we are dealing, the way had been prepared for that condition of active rivalry which the relations of the two were ultimately to assume. But there had been no special incident to demonstrate the sharp antagonism which existed. The speech of Gladstone in reply to Disraeli's attack on the coalition, however, left no room for doubt as to the true position of affairs. As Disraeli himself, on a former occasion already noted, had availed himself of a passing opportunity to strike a deadly blow at Peel's position, so now Gladstone, on the impulse of the moment, delivered a stroke which, if it was not the direct cause of the defeat of the Derby Ministry, contributed in no small degree to bring about that result. Springing to his feet as soon as Disraeli had finished his observations, he, amid a scene of wild excitement, delivered an impassioned attack on the Chancellor of the Exchequer. "This speech," he said, "is one which must be answered, and answered at the moment. The character of England involved in that of her public men—the character of England is at stake. . . . The right honourable gentle-

influence can control even the decrees of Parliaments, and without whose support the most august and ancient institutions are but 'the baseless fabric of a vision.'"

This speech of Disraeli's was not only a notable one in itself; it was remarkable for the reply it elicited. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's antagonist was William Ewart Gladstone. This great man, who had come into Parliament as member for Newark as far back as January, 1833, had, with the aid of his exceptional talents, built up for himself a great reputation as a debater and a Parliamentary tactician. His earliest leanings were towards Toryism, but when the Free Trade question split up the Conservative party, he took his place amongst the Peelites and gradually drifted further and further away from his old position of stern unbending Toryism. The rise of Disraeli to a commanding position in the Conservative councils strengthened the bent of his mind towards Liberalism. Between him and the novelist-politician there had never been any community of interest or sentiment. Their ideals



*From the painting by Thomas A. Woolnots, R.S., National Portrait Gallery.*

JOHN, FIRST LORD CAMPBELL, LORD CHANCELLOR,  
Author of "The Lives of the Lord Chancellors" and other biographical works.



*From a drawing by George Robinson, R.A.*

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY,  
When Lord Robert Cecil.

The Earl of Aberdeen now formed a Coalition Ministry, which had as its principal members Lord John Russell, Foreign Secretary; Lord Palmerston, Home Secretary; and Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Its career was marked by a period of intense national anxiety and misgiving owing to the outbreak of the war with Russia in the Crimea. The Parliamentary controversies of those perilous times are best remembered for the magnificent oratory of John Bright, who, as the Apostle of Peace, fervently protested against the war. In purity of diction, felicity of expression, and apt and impressive imagery, the speeches of this statesman at this period are hardly equalled, and are certainly not excelled, by anything in the annals of Parliamentary oratory. One beautiful passage in a speech delivered on February 23rd, 1855, has become enshrined amongst the rarest gems of eloquence. The question under discussion was the policy of the continuance of the war. "I do not suppose," he said, "that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born were slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-posts of our doors that he may spare and pass on. He takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly; and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal."

A wave of emotion swept over the House as these impressive words were uttered. When the orator had finished, an intense silence prevailed for a few moments, and then in awed accents members turned to each other to discuss the matchless eloquence to which they had

man must permit me to tell him that he is not entitled to charge with insolence men of as high position and as high character in this House as himself. And I must tell him that whatever else he has learnt, he has not learnt to keep within those limits in discussion, of moderation and of forbearance, that ought to restrain the conduct and language of every member of this House; the disregard of which, while it is an offence amongst the meanest of us, is an offence of tenfold weight when committed by the Leader of the House of Commons." A storm of protest from the Ministerialists accompanied the speaker's fiery torrent of oratory, but he continued his speech undismayed, entering into an elaborate and destructive analysis of the Budget proposals. When, a little later on, the division was taken, the criticism was shown to have had its effect. While 286 voted for the particular proposal before the House, there were 305 members against it, so that the Government were defeated by a majority of nineteen. The resignation of Ministers followed as a matter of course.

just been listening. Not since Pitt had swayed the assembly by his wonderful powers of oratory had a speech probably caused so deep an impression.

The debates on the Crimean war, besides supplying examples of splendid eloquence, were fruitful in recriminatory incidents. Both during the continuance of the Aberdeen Ministry and the term of power of the Palmerston Administration which succeeded it in 1855, Disraeli brought to bear upon Ministers all his great powers of destructive criticism, with the result that there were many sharp passages of arms across the table—to the interest of members, though perhaps not to the edification of the country. Prominently associated with the history of this stormy period is the name of John Arthur Roebuck, a politician of great ability, who, though he never held office, exercised considerable influence in Parliament during the many years he sat for Sheffield. He made himself an authority on foreign affairs, and his keen, vigorous addresses, delivered both in the House and on the platform, were read more widely, perhaps, than the utterances of any private—or, as he preferred to call himself, independent—member. Amongst his constituents he was affectionately known by the nickname of "Old Tear 'em." This quaint epithet, which so well suited his political methods, was derived from a speech which he delivered at the Cutlers' Feast on September 2nd, 1858, on the designs, or supposed designs, of the Emperor of the French. Just previously, the members of the House of Commons had visited Cherbourg by invitation. Roebuck, referring to this, observed: "It may be said that those who stand in my position ought not to say anything that excites national animosity; and I respond to that sentiment. But, sir, the farmer who goes to sleep having placed the watch-dog Tear 'em over his rickyard, hears the watch-dog bark. He, in the anger of a half somnolence, says, 'I wish Tear 'em would be quiet,' and bawls out of the window 'Down, Tear 'em!' Tear 'em does go down; the farmer goes to sleep, and he is awake by the flashing in his windows of the light of his ricks on fire. I am Tear 'em. I tell you to beware. What is the meaning of Cherbourg? It is a standing menace to England."

In the House of Commons Roebuck distinguished himself by the brilliancy of his criticisms of the muddling and incompetence of the Administration in the conduct of the Crimean campaign. It was his motion for a Committee of Inquiry into the conduct of the war that brought about the downfall of the Aberdeen Cabinet in January, 1855. Subsequently he showed himself a bitter opponent of the Administration of Lord Palmerston, though that statesman on coming into office accepted his proposed Committee of Investigation, losing thereby the services of Gladstone, Sir James Graham, and Sidney Herbert. In one of his speeches he spoke of the Duke of Newcastle as "a scapegoat that had been sent into the wilderness with the sins of the Administration upon his head." Strong exception was taken by some of the duke's old colleagues to this assertion, whereupon Roebuck imperturbably replied: "Sir, I take shame



*From a photograph by George Richmond, R.A.*

HENRY HOWARD MOLYNEUX, FOURTH EARL OF CARNARVON,  
One of the principal members of Disraeli's Cabinets. Colonial Secretary 1866-7  
and 1874-8, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1885-6.



*From an engraving after a photograph taken in the late '80s.*

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

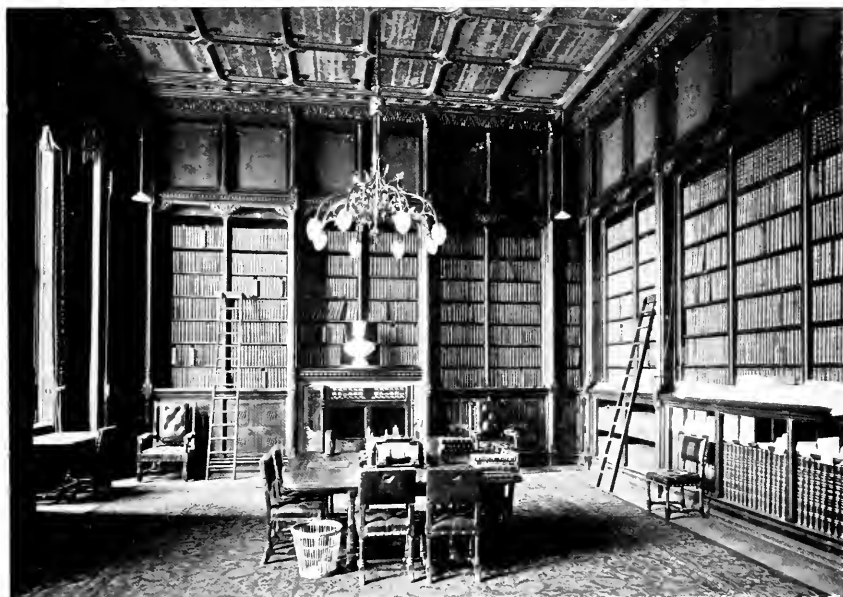
to myself for once in my life. I have indulged in panegyric, but, like almost all other men who attempt a character to which they are not accustomed, I have failed in representing it, and have failed also most completely in making myself understood. I did object to making the Duke of Newcastle a scapegoat. I gave that noble duke credit for industry and good intentions, and I said that he had done his duty according to his ability. Then I am turned round upon because I am said to have eulogised the noble duke."

With Palmerston Roebuck had many sharp passages, but the statesman entertained no enmity—indeed, if we may judge from a story which Roebuck himself once told, the old peer had a strong liking for his very candid critic. Having business to transact with the peer, Roebuck, about the period of the American Civil War, waited upon him just after he had delivered a strong speech to his constituents on the subject of the conflict. "The moment I got into his room," said Roebuck, "he turned round and put out his hands and said, 'Roebuck, Roebuck, what a devilish good speech you made

at Sheffield!' I said, 'My lord, I am greatly obliged to you, and flattered for the hard phrase you have used about my speech'—though it was a hard one, you know—I am very much flattered.' 'Flattered?' he said. 'Why, I am entirely of your opinion, though I dare not say so.'"

Palmerston's tenure of power was interrupted for a brief period from 1858 to 1859, during which the Earl of Derby, with Disraeli as his chief henchman, carried on the Administration. But his hold on the country was strengthened rather than not by the temporary check, and after the general election of 1859 he was reinstalled at the head of the Ministry with a weight of popularity behind him which made his position practically impregnable—indeed, few First Ministers of the Crown have ever enjoyed in so peculiar a degree the confidence of their countrymen of all shades of political opinion. His death in 1865 created a void in political life which could not be adequately filled. Earl Russell assumed the Premiership, and Mr. Gladstone became, for the first time, Leader of the House of Commons. The Ministry soon got into troubled water over the question of Reform. After struggling on for some time against a powerful array of adverse forces, it

finally, on June 18th, 1866, came to grief over an amendment in Committee, and resigned. The return of the Earl of Derby to power, with Disraeli again in the position of Leader of the House of Commons, followed. Though unpledged on Reform, the new Ministers speedily found that the question was one which brooked no delay. Resolutions were tabled dealing with the subject, and these were followed by the production of a bill reducing the rating in towns to a 26 franchise and making other important changes in the electoral law. Such sweeping proposals as these had not been anticipated, and there was much excitement in political quarters, which was further increased when it became known that the Government had withdrawn this scheme in favour of a measure of universal household suffrage modified by various "fancy franchises," and that as a consequence three members of the Ministry—Lord Cranborne (now the Marquis of Salisbury), Lord Carnarvon, and General Peel—had resigned.



THE HOUSE OF LORDS LIBRARY : THE QUEEN'S ROOM.

One of the pleasantest rooms of the suite set apart for the convenience of the members of the Upper House.

The passage of the bill through the House was tempestuous, but dealing in a conciliatory spirit with the amendments brought forward, Disraeli succeeded in safely carrying the scheme through to the third reading stage. His amenability to pressure, as well as his general attitude of tolerance towards Reform, excited much criticism. Not the least remarkable attack was that made by Lord Cranborne at the third reading stage. "I have heard it said," observed the noble lord, "that the bill is a Conservative triumph. If it be a Conservative triumph to have adopted the principles of your most determined adversary, the honourable member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright); if it be a Conservative triumph to have introduced a bill guarded with precautions and securities, and to have abandoned every one of those precautions and securities at the bidding of your opponents; then in the whole course of your annals I will venture to say the Conservative party has won no triumph so signal. After all, our theory of government is not that a certain number of statesmen should place themselves in office and do whatever the House of Commons bids them. Our theory of government is that

on each side of the House there should be men supporting definite opinions, and that what they have supported in opposition they should adhere to in office, and that every one should know from the fact of their being in office that those particular opinions will be supported. If you reverse that and declare that, no matter what a man has supported in opposition, the moment he gets into office it shall be open to him to reverse and repudiate it all, you practically destroy the whole basis on which our form of government rests, and you make the House of Commons a mere scrambling for office. You practically banish all honourable men from the political arena, and you will find in the long run that the time will come when your statesmen will be nothing but political adventurers, and that professions of opinion will be looked upon only as so many political manoeuvres for the purpose of attaining office." Lord Cranborne went on to say that even if he deemed the bill to be most advantageous, he should still deeply regret "that the position of the executive should have been so degraded as it has been in the present session. I should," he continued, "deeply regret to find that the House of Commons has applauded a policy of legerdemain. And I should above all things regret that this great gift to the people—if great gift you think it—should have been purchased by a political betrayal which has no parallel in our Parliamentary annals, which strikes at the root of all that mutual confidence which is the very soul of our party government, and on which only the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can be maintained."

Lord Cranborne was not the only Conservative who denounced Disraeli's Reform policy. Another vigorous speech in opposition to the measure was made by Mr. Beresford Hope, who, after criticising the conduct of the Ministry, and particularly of the Leader of the House, said that he for one, whether he lost his seat or not, would vote with his whole heart and conscience "against the Asian mystery."

Disraeli was quite equal to the occasion. He retorted with one of his most sarcastic speeches. "I can assure the honourable gentleman," he said, "that I listened with great pleasure to the invectives he delivered against me. I admire his style; it is a very great ornament to discussion, but it requires practice. I listen with the greatest satisfaction to all his exhibitions in this House—(Oh! Oh!)—and when he talks about an Asian mystery I will tell him that there are Batavian graces in all that he says which I notice with satisfaction, and which charm me." "Batavian graces," applied to Mr. Beresford Hope's somewhat ungainly style of declamation, clung to that gentleman long after the Reform question had passed beyond the actual stage of controversy. Decidedly Disraeli was a dangerous opponent to engage in lingual conflict.

Later, Disraeli speaking at Edinburgh entered into a general defence of the policy of the Derby Ministry in dealing with Reform. "I had," he said in a passage which has become historic, "to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party. It is a large party, and requires its attention to be called to



From the *Lancet* Studio, London, 1880.

ROBERT LOWE, VISCOUNT SHERBROOKE,  
Chancellor of the Exchequer in Mr. Gladstone's first Administration;  
author of the unpopular Match Tax.



questions of this kind with some pressure. I had to prepare the mind of Parliament and of the country on the question of Reform. That was not only with the concurrence of Lord Derby, but of my colleagues."

In spite of the open disaffection of not a few Conservatives and the smouldering discontent of others, Disraeli's position in the Conservative party after the passage of the Reform Bill remained unshaken. If distrusted, he was yet accepted as the only possible leader for the party. Consequently, when Lord Derby, stricken with fatal illness, on February 25th, 1868, resigned the Premiership, and Disraeli was chosen by the late Queen as his successor, the selection met with general acquiescence in the ranks of the Ministerialists. It was an unquiet throne, however, which the new Premier was to occupy. He immediately found himself face to face with the necessity of dealing with the Irish Church question, and dealing with it under political conditions which rendered failure almost certain. At the outset he essayed a temporising policy. But his hand was forced by Mr. Gladstone giving notice on March 23rd of his famous resolutions in favour of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church. The Govern-



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*  
HENRY BOUVERIE BRAND, VISCOUNT HAMPDEN,  
Speaker of the House of Commons from 1872 to 1884.

ment met the resolutions by an amendment declaring that any proposition tending towards Disestablishment and Disendowment ought to be reserved for the decision of a new Parliament. Disraeli fought what he felt from the outset to be a losing contest with characteristic game-ness. His position was rendered the more difficult by the attacks made on his flank by Lord Cranborne, in whose mind still rankled a sense of irritation at the treatment of the Reform question. The burden of the attacks was the opportunism of Disraeli. In concluding one of his speeches, the noble lord said: "I do not pretend to predict the probable course of the right honourable gentleman at the head of the Government. I should as soon undertake to tell you which way the weather-cock would point to-morrow." Disraeli, who could always be reckoned on to give as good as he received, was thoroughly equal to the occasion. "The noble lord," he observed, "is at no time wanting in imputing to us being influenced by not the most amiable motives that can regulate the conduct of public men. I do not quarrel with the invective of the noble lord. The noble lord is a man of great talent, and he has vigour in his language. There is great vigour in his invective and no want of vindictiveness. I admit that now, speaking as a critic, and perhaps not an impartial one, I must say I think it wants finish." Whether Lord Cranborne's invective lacked "finish" or not, it was not without its effect on the general political situation. The Government was defeated by majorities of sixty and sixty-five respectively in divisions on the resolutions. The resignation of Ministers was looked for, but on May 4th Disraeli announced that the decision came to was to dissolve Parliament. Heated controversy ensued as to the legitimacy of this step from a constitutional standpoint. But Ministers adhered to their resolution and continued in office until the autumn, when the general election was held, with disastrous results to the Conservatives. Without waiting for the meeting of Parliament, the Government resigned.

Gladstone was now called upon to assume the supreme political office for the first time. He was in the heyday of his splendid powers, with behind him the great reputation gained

by his brilliant administration of the country's finances in four Administrations. During the six years that his Administration lasted, several important reforms were carried, notably the Education Act, by the provisions of which the country was for the first time endowed with a State system of compulsory elementary education. The Ministry, though strong, had its ups and downs. One of the most humiliating rebuffs it received was over a proposal made in the Budget of 1871 by Mr. Robert Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to levy a tax of one halfpenny on each box of lucifer matches. Immense excitement was created by this apparently innocent proposal. The match-makers, apprehensive of the effect that the impost would have on their interests, commenced an agitation against the Budget. It was regarded with amused interest at first, but when, on April 24th, a deputation composed of several thousand East End workers marched in procession to Westminster, the authorities in their turn became alarmed. Before the demonstrators arrived at the Houses of Parliament, they were met by the police and dispersed. Subsequently complaint was made in the House of the treatment meted out to the match-makers, whereupon the Home Secretary (Mr. Bruce) explained that "such a procession was contrary to the law—the law being that no large bodies of persons should go either to the Sovereign or to Parliament for the purpose of presenting a petition.

The number permitted by law does not exceed ten persons. The Act of George III. known as the One Mile Act," he added, "applies to meetings, and provides that such meetings as that of Monday last shall not be held within one mile of Westminster." The vindication of the majesty of the law and of the privacy of Parliament in the case of the match-makers has afforded a precedent which has served to keep many awkward movements at arm's length of the Palace of Westminster. Where numerous deputations have found their way into or near the legislative precincts, it has usually been with the connivance of the authorities, or at least with their tacit approval.

The term of office of the Gladstone Administration was marked by a vigorous controversy relative to the expenditure on the Royal establishments. It was at first mostly confined to the public platform; but early in the session of 1872—on March 19th—Sir Charles Dilke raised the question in the House on a motion to inquire into the expenditure of the Civil List during the reign of Queen Victoria. At the outset of the debate the mover of the resolution was interrupted by another member, who raised a question of privilege. The former



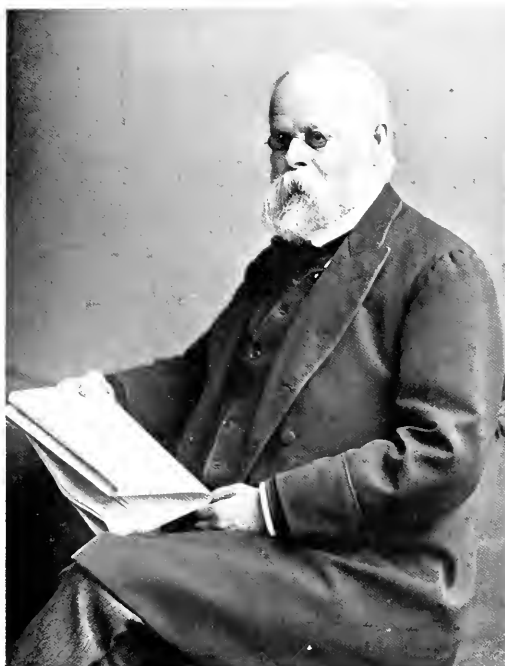
*From the painting by George Richmond, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.*

WILLIAM PAGE WOOD, BARON HATHERLEY,

Lord Chancellor from 1868 to 1872.

had outside the House avowed himself a Republican, and the question now arising was whether he had not violated the oath of allegiance to her Majesty taken by every member of the House. This gave rise to a preliminary scene of disorder, a sort of forecast of what followed. The Speaker refusing to decide as to what was consistent or not consistent with the oath, Sir Charles Dilke proceeded to state his case, attacking various items of expenditure and certain allowances to members of the Royal Family. The speech was admittedly an able one, and attacked principles and not persons. It was listened to with a fair amount of attention and was answered by Mr. Gladstone, then First Lord of the Treasury. Here the House thought the matter should have ended, but Mr. Auberon Herbert rose to address the House and was received with overpowering cries of "Divide," "Oh! Oh!" and other marks of disapproval at the continuance of the discussion. Undeterred, Mr. Herbert paused, and the uproar ceased. Commencing again, the honourable member uttered a few words, when the storm broke out anew with such violence that no one complete sentence could be heard; again and again he tried to secure a hearing, only to be overpowered. At length on the intervention of the Speaker (Mr. Brand), he was allowed to proceed for a short space of time. But as he began to attack the Constitution of the country, a large body of the members on both sides of the House rose and left. Repeated motions were made to count out the House without success, and attention was then called to the fact that strangers were present, and the House was cleared of them—including the Press—by the Sergeant-at-Arms and his officers. During the remainder of the honourable member's speech, cries and interruptions were resumed with increased vehemence, these cries emanating from members who had concealed themselves in remote and obscure parts of the House. Suddenly, amid the general uproar and confusion, loud noises were heard in imitation of the crowing of cocks, whereupon the Speaker rose and said that he had heard sounds from behind his Chair which were grossly disorderly, and he could not refrain from expressing the pain with which he had witnessed the scene that had just taken place. This rebuke from the Chair had the effect of abating the storm, and an endeavour was made to terminate the proceedings by a proposal that the House should at once adjourn, but without effect. Mr. Auberon Herbert was allowed to finish his speech, and a few other members taking part in the debate, the House divided upon the question, with the result that 276 voted against the proposal and only two, the mover and the seconder, for it.

Another remarkable scene which occurred in the House of Commons at a little later period—in July, 1875—may be mentioned in this connection. It arose out of an



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

SAMUEL PLIMSOLL,

("The Seaman's Friend"), promoter of important shipping legislation.



By M. Noble.

## BUST OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

In the Queen's Room, House of Lords Library, presented by Mr. O'Leary, Librarian.

Plimsoll, in impassioned tones, declined to withdraw the statement, and made his way from his seat to the table of the House. In one hand he held a written document, which he flourished in the face of the Premier and then placed it upon the table. "This is my protest," said he, and then resumed his seat. One course only could be followed by the House—that of censuring the member for his disorder. This was, after the lapse of a few days, decided upon, but a carefully written apology was then forthcoming from the offender, in which he withdrew every expression contrary to Parliamentary usage, but added that he did not withdraw any statement of fact. Satisfied with this amend, the House generously forgave the honourable member for his breach of order. His zeal was not without its effect, as a strong feeling was created in the country by his protest, and although late in the session, the Government was compelled, by pressure from outside, to introduce and pass a fresh measure dealing with unseaworthy ships.

Less than twelve months after this episode in which Mr. Plimsoll figured so prominently, Disraeli was elevated to the House of Lords with the title of Earl of Beaconsfield. His last utterance in the House of Commons was made on August 12th, 1876, on the state of affairs in the East, which then exclusively occupied public attention. With Disraeli disappeared from the popular chamber one of the strangest and most fascinating figures who have ever spoken within its walls. His policy may have been, as it was represented by his opponents, mischievous; his political morals corrupt; he may have been, as he was often called, an unscrupulous adventurer and a political mountebank; but he had the invaluable quality of making himself interesting, and this, from the point of view of the non-political reader, may be held to extenuate a multitude of political sins.

announcement made by Disraeli, as the head of the then Administration, that the Government were unable to proceed with a bill dealing with the overloading of merchant ships. The statement, as well as the subject, appeared unexciting, but it had a visible effect upon Mr. Samuel Plimsoll, one of the members for Derby, who had devoted his best time and energy for years to the cause of the sailor, and to whom the withdrawal of the bill meant the blighting of eager hopes and long-formed plans. White with emotion, Mr. Plimsoll rose in his place and implored the Prime Minister to reconsider his decision. In passionate tones he exclaimed: "Hundreds and hundreds of brave men are sent to death, their wives are made widows and their children are made orphans, in order that a few speculative scoundrels, in whose hearts there is neither the love of God nor the fear of God, may make unhallowed gains." Reference was then made to the loss of certain ships whose registered owner bore the name of a member of the House representing a seaport town. "And," said Mr. Plimsoll, "I shall ask some question about other members of the House also. I am determined to unmask the villains who send to death and destruction—" Here the Speaker rose and asked the honourable member to withdraw the word "villains" with reference to members of the House. Mr.



*Portrait of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, P. M. A., by Sir John Everett Millais, M. A.*

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.,  
 One of the most successful of the many portraits of the famous statesman.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### *THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTS (concluded).*

THE elevation of Disraeli to the Peers left his great rival, Gladstone, in undisputed pre-eminence in the House of Commons. No one approached him either in intellectual gifts or in political influence. Yet it was not an undistinguished assembly. In it sat Mr. Gathorne Hardy, whose impetuous eloquence won for him the title of the "Hotspur of Debate." There also was Mr. Robert Lowe in the plenitude of his great powers; Sir William Vernon Harcourt, rapidly pushing his way to fame; John Bright, with his eyes undimmed and the natural force of his eloquence yet unabated; and Mr. W. E. Forster, the hero of the education settlement, whose rugged rhetoric had a certain power of charm not always exercised by the polished flights of more brilliant orators. Amongst the younger men were two destined to cut a considerable figure upon the political stage in succeeding decades. These were Lord Randolph Churchill, who entered the House as member for the family borough of Woodstock, and Mr. Arthur Balfour, the present Premier, who sat in Parliament for the first time in 1874 as member

for Hertford. Also as members of the popular chamber at the time that Disraeli took his farewell of it were Charles Stewart Parnell, the great Irish Leader, who had been elected as member for Meath in the previous year; and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, whose election for Birmingham had only taken place two or three months prior to the Conservative Premier's transfer to the Upper House. Whether regarded from the standpoint of matured statesmanship or from that of latent talent, the assembly was above the average.

The history of the Victorian Parliaments from the period that Disraeli disappeared from the scene is too recent and touches too many acutely controversial questions to be dealt with in any detail in a work such as this. It will suffice for our purpose to draw attention to some of the more picturesque facts and incidents which distinguished the career of Parliament in the last quarter of a century of the late Queen's reign, leaving to the serious historian the more onerous and responsible task of recording the precise course of events and passing judgment upon the actors on the political stage.

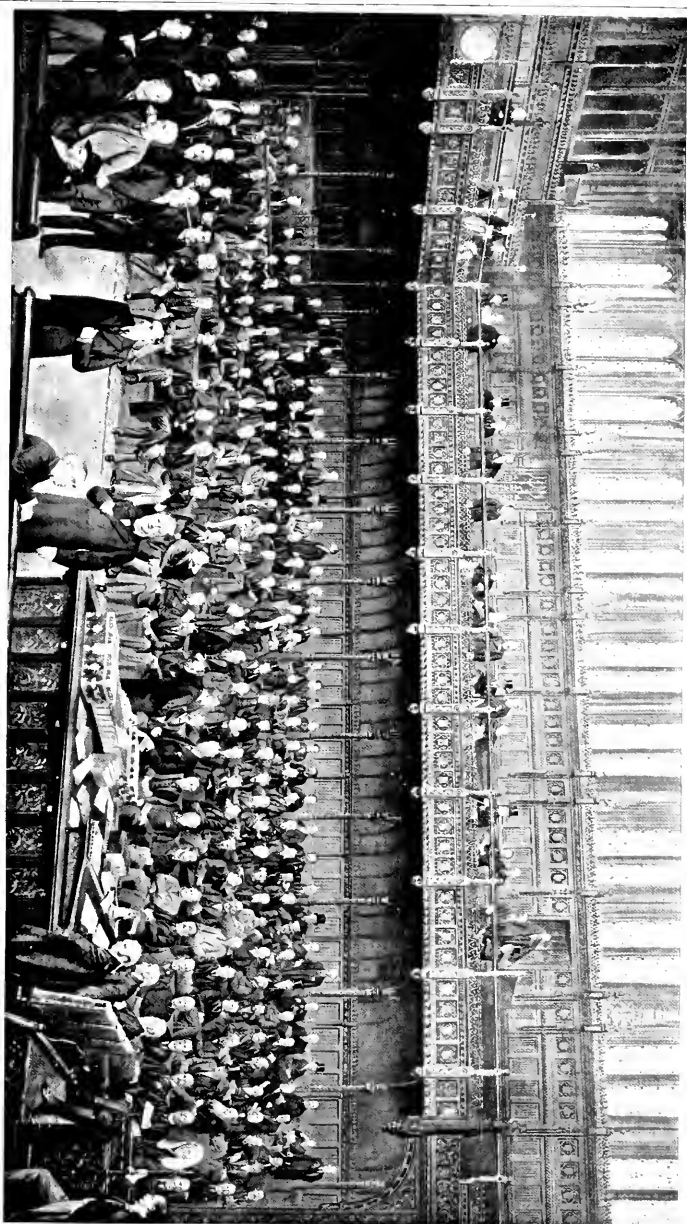
One striking feature of the period which may properly be alluded to is the rise and development of working-class representation.



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

MR. THOMAS BURT, M.P.

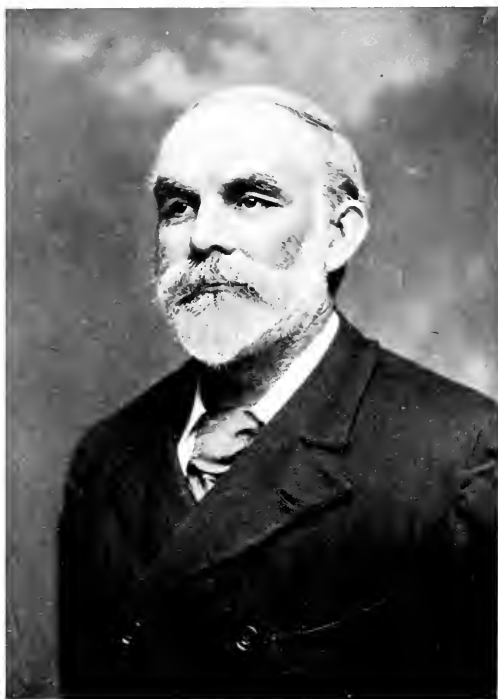
The first genuine working-man representative to be returned to the House of Commons.



*For position see Messrs. Pickett and Pickett, New Bond Street, from the sketch given.*

# THE HOUSE OF COMMONS: A DIVISION CALLED.

Mr. Speaker fully in the Chair. The view shows the Ministerial benches with Mr. Edmon, Mr. Chamberlain and other Ministers. In the immediate foreground are Sir William Harcourt, and other leading members of the Opposition.



MR. JOHN BURNS, M.P.

Member for Battersea; one of the best known and ablest representatives of Labour in the House of Commons.

Until this juncture in the life of Parliament the House of Commons had never included within its ranks a genuine working man sent to Parliament by working-class voters to specially represent their interests. The nearest approach to such representatives were men like Cobbett, who, though their political aspirations and social sentiments were entirely democratic, could yet not claim to be what the modern Labour representatives are. The pioneer of this new class of legislator was Mr. Thomas Burt, who in 1874 was elected as member for Morpeth. In his younger days Mr. Burt worked in a coal mine, undergoing all the hardships and sharing all the dangers inseparable from the miner's life. A thoughtful, studious lad, endowed with no common share of intelligence, and a considerable fund of his native northern shrewdness, he speedily made his way to a position of influence amongst his fellows, and finally became in a real sense their leader. His return to Parliament was a great achievement, honourable alike to himself and to those who sent him to Westminster. It was also in the nature of an experiment, and as such was somewhat closely

and anxiously watched by thoughtful men all over the country. But whatever misgivings may have been entertained at the outset, they were speedily dissipated by the member's career in Parliament. His quiet, unassuming demeanour, his zeal for the public good, and his restrained and reasoned oratory, won for him hosts of friends and well-wishers amongst all parties. Such were his qualities that when, in 1890, the German Emperor convened a Labour Conference at Berlin, he was with general approval selected as one of the British delegation. An even greater tribute was paid him two years later, when he was appointed a member of the Government, and as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade took his seat on the Treasury Bench amid cheers from all parts of the House. Mr. Burt found what others had discovered before him, that lowly birth was no bar to goodwill—or, to use his own stronger words, that “probably there is no place in the world where social position counts for less than in the British House of Commons. It may be unfair in its judgment of a man, but it never measures him by a mean standard. It estimates him by his character and ability, not by the extent of his possessions, and cares just as little for a peasant as for a lord. The same cannot be said with equal truth of any other assemblage of Englishmen.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1880 Mr. Burt was reinforced by several other working-men representatives, the most conspicuous of whom was Mr. Henry Broadhurst, who, beginning life as a stonemason, became

<sup>1</sup> Article in *Contemporary Review*, 1889.



Parliamentary Secretary of the Trades Union Council, and, through the influence of that organisation and by virtue of his own sturdy abilities, was elected member for Stoke-upon-Trent. Like Mr. Burt, Mr. Broadhurst speedily made his way in the House, and finally (in 1886) attained Ministerial rank, filling the appointment of Under-Secretary of the Home Department. At the present time Mr. Broadhurst represents Leicester, by which constituency he was first returned in 1894, in conjunction with Mr. Walter Hazell, a large employer of labour—a happy conjunction of interests, which proves that a Labour candidature need not be conducted on exclusive or selfish lines. Mr. Broadhurst's testimony, like that of Mr. Burt, is warmly appreciative of the friendliness of the House. Addressing a meeting at Stoke-upon-



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER.

A leading member of Gladstone's first and second Administrations. The introducer of the Education Act of 1870.



*From a photo by Henry Sorey, Bow, E.*

SIR MANCHERJEE MERWANJEE BHOWNAGREE, K.C.I.E.,

Member for North-East Bethnal Green, a distinguished Parsee who may be regarded as the representative of India in the Imperial Parliament.

Trent in 1881, he said: "I entered the House without wealth, influence, or friends other than my own class, and no one could have been more courteously and generously received than I have been, even by political opponents. In the House of Commons it mattered not what had been a man's position, nor what was the sphere of life in which he moved; if he had anything to say worth listening to, he was equal to the noblest and richest in the assembly. Therefore working men, if they chose to send to Parliament a representative from themselves, might know that he would be received with as much respect as if he was the son of a millionaire."

Mr. Joseph Arch, the representative of the agricultural labouring class, and Mr. George Howell, a thoughtful writer on Labour questions, are other prominent sons of toil who have reinforced the green benches of the House of Commons. But perhaps the most striking figure of all which has been seen in the Parliamentary Labour ranks is that of Mr. John Burns, the member for Battersea. This gentleman has a strongly marked individuality, which, if it were allied to less shrewdness, might have long since made shipwreck of his career in the popular chamber. But it is not without reason that Mr. Burns has won for himself the title of "the Statesman of Labour." He has a keen



*From a portrait by Mitchell & Son.*

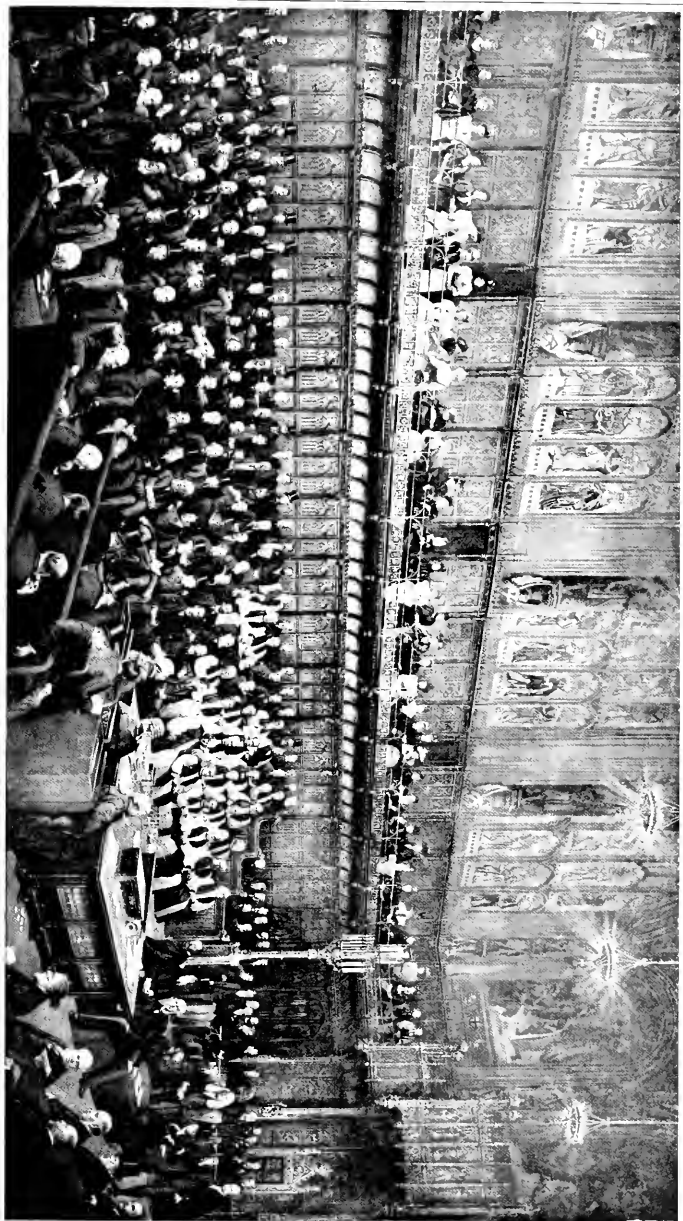
CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.

The Irish Nationalist leader: a commanding figure in the later Victorian Parliaments.

and confidence of his fellow-members, and, to a modified extent, their sympathy.

While the Labour members have added to the ranks of legislators a new class, an even more remarkable type of representative was returned to the House of Commons in the later Victorian Parliament(s) in the Indian member. Milton, in his grandest imaginings of the future of "the great and puissant nation," probably never contemplated that distant India would have at Westminster natives of its populous soil to watch its interests in an Imperial Parliament. But such was to be the case. In 1892 was returned to Parliament, as member for Central Finsbury, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, a member of the great Parsee community of Western India. In his earlier days Mr. Naoroji had been an official in a native state, but his greatest reputation was made as a publicist in Bombay, where he for many years occupied a prominent position as a private citizen. Though the chances of the electoral struggle rendered his membership but a brief one, he was sufficiently long in the House to demonstrate that a native of India, speaking with the authority which comes of popular election, could be very valuable as the mouthpiece of educated native sentiment, even if he had no direct authority to represent them. In the circumstances it was fortunate that the election which witnessed Mr. Naoroji's rejection—that of 1895—should have marked the return for North-East Bethnal Green of Mr. (now Sir) Mancherjee M. Bhownagregree, a co-religionist of his, and a gentleman equally well equipped by training in public life for the rôle of unaccredited "member for India" in the Imperial Parliament. A journalist in early life, an official representative of an

appreciation of the forces which give the House of Commons its peculiar distinction amongst the popular chambers of the world; and he, in addition, possesses to a marked extent the tactfulness without which the most brilliant talents are as naught there. Thus equipped, he has gone from one success to another, until he occupies to-day a position of influence and popularity which many an older and—in a political and social sense—a more influential politician might with good reason envy. Though his views may be extreme, they are felt to be honestly held, and, as such, are regarded with that tolerance which the House invariably extends to the genuine outspoken expression of opinion, no matter from what quarter it comes. His vigorous rhetoric, marked as it is by a certain epigrammatic force and a broad humour, is invariably received with good temper; while on occasions, on questions into which political feeling does not enter, his co-operation is actually welcomed by those opposed to him. In short, he enjoys the general respect



*The interior of the House of Lords, New Bond Street, from the front gallery.*

THE HOUSE OF LORDS DURING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, SEPTEMBER 20TH, 1882.

The Earl Chamberlain (Lord Herschell) about to put the question.



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

The secularist leader, whose return as member for Northampton led to an acrimonious controversy relative to the Parliamentary oath.

of his religious belief, or his absence of religious belief. But in past times, down to quite recent years, fierce controversies have been waged around the question of the admissibility of the administration of the oath to certain persons. One such struggle attended Daniel O'Connell's admission to the House of Commons. The Liberator was returned to Parliament as member for Clare in 1828, previous to the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill. Up to April, 1829, he had forborne, on the advice of his friends, from making any effort to assert his claim. But the Catholic Emancipation Bill having been passed, he then decided to present himself in the House, believing that the Ministry of the day would not oppose him. He had, however, reckoned without the hostility of the King (George IV.), whose inveterate dislike to him resulted in the adoption of measures tending to his exclusion. Arrived at the Bar, the ordinary oath was tendered to him, and on his refusing to take it, the House by resolution decreed that his election was null and void. O'Connell went over to Ireland, was immediately re-elected, and, returning to Westminster, took his seat under the provisions of the then recently passed Act. Although the portals of Parliament were widened on the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, it was not until a later period

important native state, a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, and a public man of recognised standing in India, he combined in his person qualifications which are highly desirable in a member of Parliament. In the House as well as outside it he rapidly won his way to favour, and it was with general satisfaction that at the General Election of 1900 he was once more returned. It is possible that the future may have in store the devising of some system of Imperial representation by which members may be directly delegated from India. But whether this is done or not, a picturesque interest will always attach to the membership of these two gentlemen, who wooed and won English constituencies, and so unbarred the doors of the Senate House to a community whose very existence was probably unknown to the members of most of the earlier English Parliaments.

Associated with the subject of exceptional representation with which we have been dealing is the question of the Parliamentary oath. Nowadays it would be impossible for a man to be excluded from Parliament on account

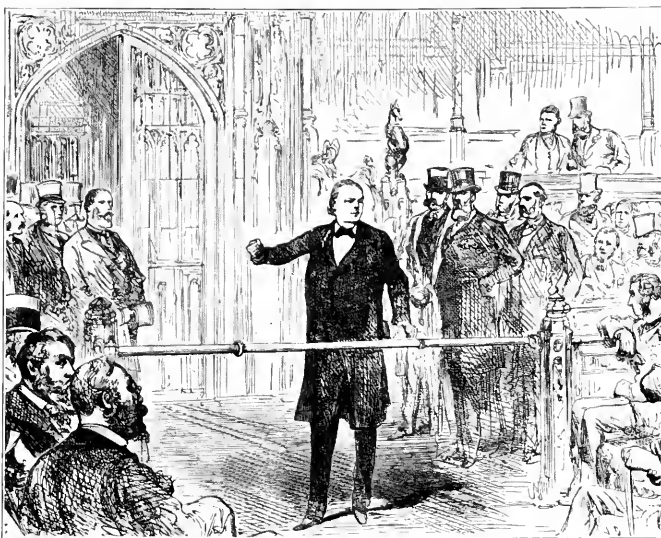


*From a photo by McLeish.*

SIR RALPH A. GOSSETT.

Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons during the Bradlaugh controversy.

that Jews were allowed to sit and vote in the House of Commons. In 1849 Baron Lionel de Rothschild was sent to the House of Commons by the City of London. Waiting for two years, the duly elected member sat below the Bar, hoping a measure of relief would be passed; but his expectations being disappointed, he resigned his seat, and was re-elected. Considering this a mandate from his constituents to force the matter upon the attention of the



CHARLES BRADLAUGH AT THE BAR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS CLAIMING THE RIGHT TO MAKE AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE INSTEAD OF TAKING THE OATH.

House, the hon. member presented himself at the table to be sworn, but on his objecting to that portion of the oath of abjuration "on the true faith of a Christian," as not being binding upon his conscience, the House refused to allow him to take his seat, and for seven years he remained in name only a member, occupying a seat below the Bar, but without the right of voting. It was different with Mr. Alderman Salomons, also a Jew. Elected for Greenwich in 1851, his position was on all fours with that of Baron Rothschild. He refused to take the oath contrary to his conscience, but claimed his right to be an active member, and denying the authority of the House to prevent him voting, he took his seat within the Bar and voted in three divisions, and for doing so was proceeded against in the Exchequer Court and fined £500. A measure was thereafter brought into Parliament dealing with the question and passed into law, Baron de Rothschild being the first member to take advantage of the change.

In Parliament, as in other places, history repeats itself, and Mr. Bradlaugh, upon his election for Northampton in 1880, found himself in a somewhat similar position to that of the Jews thirty years previously—but with a difference: Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself at the table and claimed the right to affirm instead of taking the oath, on the ground that he had repeatedly done so in courts of law. It was notorious that Mr. Bradlaugh was a person without religious belief, and although the objection to allowing him to affirm was of a technical nature—no provision for such a case existing—there was a strong feeling against him on account of his heterodox opinions. Long and exciting debates took place in relation to the matter, and violent scenes occurred in the House. On one occasion Mr. Bradlaugh, denying the right of the House to exclude him, made his way to the table and administered the oath to himself. Upon another occasion he endeavoured to force his way into the House, and was removed by police-constables into Palace Yard. He at one period of the dispute was ordered into prison under the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms; and so the matter went on. Never before in the memory of the oldest member or official had such scenes taken place. The controversy was not finally settled until a new Parliament met, when Mr. Bradlaugh was allowed to take the oath without interruption.

In the contest between the House and the member for Northampton, the celebrated "Fourth Party," consisting of the late Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. A. J. Ballour, Sir H. Drummond Wolff, and Sir John Gorst, took a leading part. Free lances in the political arena, they harassed the Government with Mr. Gladstone at its head; they attacked their own friends when it suited them to do so; and were eventually, to some extent, instrumental in bringing about the defeat of the Liberal Government—Mr. Gladstone's second Administration. Before this event occurred many stirring scenes were witnessed in the House, one of which may be recalled. In 1884 the House had met for an autumn session, with the intention of again passing the bill for extending the franchise to counties. The measure had got through the Commons in the ordinary session, but had failed to receive the approval of the House of Lords. Agitations had been carried on in the country, and public meetings held in various places, notably at Birmingham, where a demonstration organised at Aston against the measure had led to serious riots. Mr. Chamberlain was accused in various quarters of being a party to the disorderly proceedings; and upon this occasion Lord Randolph Churchill determined to bring the matter before the House. He charged Mr. Chamberlain, one of her Majesty's Ministers, holding the high office of President of the Board of Trade, with an incitement to interference with the freedom of public discussion, and with a justification of riot and disorder. The House looked forward to a good crisp debate, Lord Randolph Churchill having publicly announced that he intended to "draw the badge." The noble lord made the most of his opportunity, bringing forward a general charge of complicity in the riotous proceedings of the Birmingham Liberal Association, with which Mr. Chamberlain was connected,



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

LORD RANDOLPH SPENCER CHURCHILL.

Secretary for India in Lord Salisbury's first, and Chancellor of the Exchequer in his second, Administration.

and supporting it with allegations of forged tickets of admission, of hired ruffians to break up the meeting of the Conservatives, and of public speeches of the Minister calculated to encourage disorder. It was a formidable indictment prepared with much care. But Mr. Chamberlain was quite equal to the occasion. He not only from his point of view completely refuted the charges against himself and his supporters, but he turned the tables upon his assailant by producing sworn evidence of hirelings who had been paid by the organisers of the meeting to prevent by violence any legitimate opposition being shown, and to stifle the free expression of opinion. As to the accusation of making inflammatory speeches about his opponents, he quoted Lord Randolph Churchill's language when addressing an audience. "I have," said Mr. Chamberlain, "culled a few of the choice flowers of rhetoric that are to be found in the speeches of the noble lord. In my own case he has described me as a 'pinchbeck Robespierre.' Well, I believe Robespierre was by common consent of his contemporaries called



*Reproduced by permission of the Art Union of London from the "Scene" photo of the picture by David Morrell, R.A.*

**THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH AT BLENHEIM.**

One of a series of paintings designed for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament.

the 'incorruptible.' The historical memory of the noble lord can furnish him with the names of some persons who are not entitled to that appellation."

The House enjoyed the cut-and-thrust duel between the two experts of debate, and loudly cheered each telling retort. And so it was with many other oratorical encounters in which the two chief actors in this incident were subsequently to figure, either with Gladstone as a third party to the quarrel or as a mutual antagonist. It would not be proper, perhaps, to call it the palfrey period of Parliamentary fence; but it unquestionably will compare in personal interest with all but the most brilliant times in the modern life of the House of Commons. How completely the scene was changed by the removal, first of Lord Randolph Churchill and later of Gladstone, it is not necessary to relate. Nor need the stormy course of the Home Rule movement, with its dramatic and even tragic interludes, and its momentous political consequences, be traced. These are matters which are still fresh in the public recollection, and in regard to which acute controversy still rages. Some future day, when the leading actors still on the stage have passed away, the events will provide writers who are treating of the life of the House of Commons with material for some chapters of absorbing interest, and political philosophers with not a few facts upon which to build their theories of the development of the forces which go to the making of history.

Before, however, final leave is taken of the Victorian Parliaments, a reference seems to be demanded to the leading men who, at the close of a memorable era in the history of the country, were foremost in the ranks of Parliamentarians. Compared with the talent which existed at some earlier periods in the life of the House of Commons, the *personnel* of the two Front Benches when the twentieth century dawned was not remarkable. But it has its peculiar elements of strength, and time may yet show that the genius which constitutes the title of the Parliamentarian to renown, like history, repeats itself. First to claim notice by right of Ministerial rank, if not of intellectual pre-eminence, is Mr. Arthur James Balfour, the present Premier. In the roll of British Premiers there is not one whose career presents more points of personal attraction than this distinguished statesman. As litterateur, philosopher, and politician he has in distinct walks of life built up for himself a position of authority and



MR. BALFOUR'S ROOM AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

It is in this apartment that the Premier does the greater part of his arduous work during the time that Parliament is sitting.

popularity, while he has by a combination of qualities become a social force greater, perhaps, than any of his predecessors in the high office he now fills.

Mr. Balfour's early Parliamentary training, as we have seen, was in the rough and tumble of the irregular Parliamentary warfare provided by the Fourth Party. As an important unit of that historic quartette he practised himself in the arts of political controversy, throwing himself into the struggle with a zest which seemed to be foreign to his equable and easy-going nature. In this fashion he acquired a readiness in debate and a self-confidence which are usually only forthcoming after many years of servitude in the Legislative Chamber. Advancement to Ministerial rank came to him as by right of hard and strenuous and successful exertion in the cold shades of Opposition. When Lord Salisbury formed his Ministry in 1885, he was chosen for the important office of President of the Local Government Board. In this position, as well as in the *role* of Vice-President of the Scotch Education Department, to which





*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

President of the Local Government Board in 1885-86; Secretary for Scotland, 1886-87; Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1874-81; First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons, 1901; Prime Minister, 1902.



*From a photograph by London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM HENRY SMITH,  
Leader of the House of Commons for several years.

appointment, on Mr. W. H. Smith's death in 1891, as First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons. Mr. Balfour's rise to these coveted posts—the highest save one open to the aspiring member of the House of Commons—was so exceptionally rapid that there were some misgivings even amongst the right honourable gentleman's friends at the promotion, thoroughly deserved though it was. But he speedily showed that the feeling was without justification. His handling of the House indicated how completely he had mastered the art of Parliamentary direction. Firm and yet conciliatory, he piloted his way dexterously through the shoals which thickly bestrew the course of the Leader of the House. Some who presumed on his inexperience quickly discovered that they had made a mistake, and that beneath the placid, bland exterior were fires which, if the blast were applied, would burst forth with consuming fury. Where Mr. Balfour showed himself weakest, perhaps, was in his management of legislation. His constitutional antipathy to detail occasionally led him into difficult

he was appointed on the formation of Lord Salisbury's second Ministry in 1886, he justified the confidence reposed in him. But his great opportunity, of course, did not come until 1887, when he was called upon to fill the post of Chief Secretary for Ireland in one of the most stirring epochs of Ireland's chequered history. How in that capacity he fought against powerful and resolute adversaries a political battle such as hardly any English Minister had ever before been called upon to fight—how after many checks and disappointments, and some humiliations, he eventually emerged the victor—does not need to be told here. His administration of the Irish Office was by general consent one of the most brilliant feats in domestic statesmanship that a young and largely untried Minister had, in the long course of Parliamentary history, been able to place to his account.

The reward for the eminent services rendered was appropriately handsome. It took the form of the Chief Secretary's



*From the painting by Edward Leach, R.A., in the National Portrait Gallery.*

SIR STAFFORD HENRY NORTHCOTE, FIRST EARL  
OF IDESLEIGH.

The popular statesman who from 1876 to 1885 led the Conservative party in the House of Commons.



*From a photo by Lubbock Weston & Sons, Ltd., London.*

ROBERT ARTHUR TALBOT GASCOYNE CECIL, THIRD MARQUESS OF SALISBURY, K.G.

A recent photograph of the eminent statesman.

situations. He did not always adequately realise at the moment how much depended upon some apparently trivial matter under discussion. But if he made mistakes, he showed consummate skill in remedying them. Often when his political opponents have congratulated themselves on having fairly entrapped him, he has sailed off with flying colours, thanks to an intuitive perception of the point where the position was weakest.

Mr. Balfour's tactical skill is reinforced by splendid debating powers. While his style is pleasing and his matter refined, he possesses to a full degree the robust qualities which are essential to successful Parliamentary oratory. He is always at his best when he is on his defence. Then the latent pugnacious element in his nature bursts out, and he becomes transformed by the force of his own passion. The stimulus applied by the ringing cheers of his supporters helps him forward. One telling point is made after another; deadly thrusts follow in rapid succession. He alternately slashes and pulverises his opponents until they are left



MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S ROOM AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

One of a suite of apartments in close proximity to the Legislative Chamber set apart for the use of Ministers.

limp and helpless, with scarcely breath sufficient to protest against the castigation. Strenuous as Mr. Balfour is at these times, he never oversteps the bounds of courtesy. There is no Minister of modern times who has shown more scrupulous deference to the canons of good taste, or who has in all his relations with political friend and foe displayed better feeling. For this reason he enjoys a personal popularity of a very striking kind. The tribute recently paid to him, with the cordial approval of his followers, by the Leader of the Opposition—Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—on Mr. Balfour's first appearance in the House of Commons after his elevation to the Premiership, was a testimony to the singular regard in which he is held. Such a demonstration was almost unique in the annals of Parliament. It will probably be many years before it is repeated under analogous circumstances.

Even more remarkable in its way than the influence which Mr. Balfour exercises in the House of Commons is the power over the assembly possessed by his colleague, Mr. Joseph



*J. Chamberlain*

*J. Benjamin Stone. June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1902*

THE RIGHT HON. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, LL.D., D.C.L., SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

From a photograph specially taken at the House of Commons by Sir Benjamin Stone, M.P., immediately after the terms of surrender of the Boer forces, and of the consequent close of the South African war, were announced in the House.



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

LORD RUSSELL OF KILLOWEN,

Who (as Sir Charles Russell) played a conspicuous part in the political history of the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

the Cabinet; Mr. Balfour's period of political apprenticeship was almost as protracted, extending from the time of his election for Hertford in 1874 until his appointment as Secretary for Scotland in 1886. The career of Mr. Asquith supplies the nearest parallel to that of Mr. Chamberlain amongst his contemporaries; but the right honourable gentleman was six years a member before he entered the Cabinet, against the four years' probation of the Colonial Secretary. In point of fact, Mr. Chamberlain's advance to the front rank of statesmen is only out rivalled by that of the younger Pitt, who, within a little over a year of his election for Appleby, became, on July 6th, 1782, when at the age of only twenty-three, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Faults of temper of a very grave kind are often attributed to Mr. Chamberlain, and doubtless his disposition is not of the sweetest; but he is far from being the character that he is painted by some of those opposed to him. A quality which he has conspicuously shown throughout his career is unflinching loyalty to his friends. It has never been said of him, as it has of other prominent statesmen, that he has used men as stepping-stones to power, and kicked

Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary. Where the Prime Minister has conquered by engaging personal qualities wedded to brilliant intellectual attainments, his friend and co-adjutor has succeeded by the sheer force of a master mind acting in the face of the most unsympathetic, and occasionally anti-pathetic, influences. He has gone to the front because of the prejudices against him rather than by reason of any personal feeling in his favour. The careers of few statesmen supply a more instructive study. Entering Parliament in 1876, as far as Imperial politics were concerned a practically unknown man, he became within less than four years a member of the Cabinet. Usually the way to the charmed circle of Ministers, even for those whose progress is smoothed by high birth or powerful interest, is only to be found through a succession of subordinate positions, and after a long and arduous Parliamentary training. For example, the elder Pitt was eleven years at Westminster before he became a Cabinet Minister, Canning fourteen years, Peel thirteen years, Disraeli fifteen years, and Palmerston as many as twenty-one years. If we take the careers of statesmen of the present era, Mr. Chamberlain's rise appears not less startling. Mr. Gladstone had been thirteen years in Parliament before he entered



*From a sketch by Leslie Ward.*

LORD SALISBURY.

One of the artist's clever caricatures of the Conservative statesman.

them over when they had served his ends. The accusation, indeed, has been the other way—that he has been unduly solicitous of the fortunes of those who, in the days when the future seemed dark, stood by him. It is an honourable charge, and one which shows at least that the Colonial Secretary is not selfish and unsympathetic, as he has occasionally been depicted. In point of fact, Mr. Chamberlain, though outwardly a somewhat hard man, is by no means lacking in sentiment. No personal incident in his later Parliamentary career is better remembered than his display of emotion on the interesting occasion of the maiden speech of his son, Mr. Austen Chamberlain. The inner man peeped out then in a fashion which clearly indicated that behind that calm, business-like exterior was a personality as human as of the best or the weakest of his colleagues.

As a debater Mr. Chamberlain enjoys a greater reputation than any living statesman. The House never fills so readily as it does for him. The intimation that "Chamberlain is up" always suffices, whatever may be the occasion, to bring members swarming into the Legislative Chamber from the Lobby, smoking-rooms, the Library, the Terrace—in short, from all places to which the average legislator is accustomed to retire to escape the boredom inflicted by prosy orators.

And Mr. Chamberlain not only attracts an audience; he holds it—which, perhaps, is an even greater testimony to his ability, for there is no more fastidious and exacting body than the House of Commons. To win its approval the rarest qualities are needed. Mere rhetorical power is not sufficient. Every member of the assembly is a public speaker himself, and a proper scorn is felt for those little devices which go to make up the equipment of the platform orator. The elaborately prepared speech, bristling with carefully-thought-out "impromptus," the profound philosophical disquisition with its ostentatious parade of academic learning, the fiery oration, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing—all these various styles of utterance, which are so effective in other walks of life, are absolutely wasted in the House of Commons. What members appreciate above all things is a lucid, business-like statement, illumined, it may be, by flashes of wit or a pretty play of fancy, but never degenerating into mere rhetoric. It is because Mr. Chamberlain's contributions to debate have precisely these qualities that he has made the success he has done. When he intervenes in debate it can be confidently reckoned that he will speak very much to the point, and set out in orderly array the most powerful arguments that can be used against his opponents. His readiness and



SIR CHARLES FREDERICK HAMOND, M.P., AGED 81.

The oldest member of the House of Commons. From a photograph by his friend Sir Benjamin Stone, M.P., taken on the Terrace, July, 1899.

resourcefulness are proverbial. Again and again on some important occasion when the subject has been complicated and abstruse he has been known to jump to his legs, and with only a few fugitive notes contained on a single sheet of notepaper launch into a brilliant speech of an hour's duration, in which, while he has analysed with merciless force the contentions put forward just previously from the opposite side of the House, he has presented in telling fashion the views of his own party. Those interjections of inconvenient "voices," which at times throw even the most able speakers off their balance, seem, in his case, only to stimulate the flow of his oratory. With lightning rapidity he is down on the interrupter, and he worries him as a terrier does a rat until he has left him limp and silent, and only too glad to allow the speaker to resume the thread of his argument.

This intellectual nimbleness of Mr. Chamberlain, if effective at St. Stephen's, is doubly so in the country, where the less astute and less informed character of his audiences gives him a wider field for its exercise. Mr. Chamberlain's extreme readiness in this respect has given rise to a charge of dialectical trickery. It is averred that he deliberately prepares for these interruptions, and that what outwardly appears a sudden inspiration prompted by the circumstances of the moment is in reality the fruits of a carefully laid plot to which he has devoted much previous thought. Possibly there is some ground for this allegation; but, even so, the position of Mr. Chamberlain as a speaker is left unaffected. If the great aim of oratory is to impress

the hearer with the strength of the speaker's cause and the weakness of his opponent's, as we take it to be, it matters little by what means that aim is achieved. In political warfare, as in the region of military action, tactics have their place, and to condemn a speaker because he is an adept in leading his opponents into an *impasse* in which he can fall upon them with ease and effect, is akin to quarrelling with the generalship of a great military captain who is successful in planning ambushes. If Mr. Chamberlain's speeches are eminently successful in the manner of their delivery, they are not less striking in substance. One of the lessons acquired in his Edgbaston days was to thoroughly master a subject before speaking upon it, and this he has never forgotten. Whatever the topic may be, Mr. Chamberlain is ready with his facts. As a consequence he is rarely caught tripping. Occasionally it has happened in debate that when he has made a more than ordinarily effective point some incautious opponent has challenged him for his authority, and it has almost invariably been forthcoming, not seldom under circumstances which have brought confusion upon the rash intervener. Take him for all in all, Mr. Chamberlain is perhaps one of the greatest debaters that the House has ever known.



From a sketch by E. T. R.-J.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.



From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.

THE RIGHT HON. JOHN MORLEY.

Irish Secretary in Mr. Gladstone's 1886 and 1892 Administrations, and also in Lord Rosebery's Administration.





*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

The eminent statesman is here represented in the evening of his days—in the period during which he was familiarly and affectionately known as “The Grand Old Man.”

*W. E. Gladstone*



*From a photograph by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

THE RIGHT HON. SIR HENRY H. FOWLER,

Financial Secretary to the Treasury and President of the Local Government Board under Mr. Gladstone, and Secretary for India in Lord Rosebery's Administration.

Another figure which has filled a great place in the popular assembly in the later Victorian Parliaments is that of Sir William Vernon Harcourt. This eminent statesman has, perhaps, been more concerned than any other man living with the great movements which have gone to make political history in the last quarter of a century. The intimate and faithful henchman of Mr. Gladstone, the strenuous political leader ever in the heat of the fray, he has made for himself a position of peculiar distinction amongst the public men of his time. In years, as in political experience, he is the senior of every one of his leading contemporaries in the House of Commons, with the exception of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. He is, in fact, almost the only conspicuous survival of the old school of statesmen of which Gladstone and Beaconsfield were distinguished representatives. Nor is his association with the politicians of the past merely a matter of age and political connections. His modes of thought and his methods of oratory are those of a bygone Parliamentary era. He is one of the very few speakers who hazard a Latin quotation. The fine *ora voluendo* style of declamation once so much favoured by eminent speakers in the House of Commons still finds in him an exponent. He has the same love of persiflage which characterised the

debates in the popular chamber a half-century ago. In fine, while everything almost has changed in the House of Commons in the last generation, Sir William Harcourt adheres to the traditions and principles which governed the life of the House when he entered it as member for Oxford in 1868, before the flood of Reform had swept in a new class of members.

As befits one who obtained his early oratorical inspiration from the Titanic combats between Disraeli and Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt is above all things a good fighter. He has the rollicking love of the Irishman for the fray, and quite the Irishman's capacity for dealing and receiving hard knocks. His partisanship is so thorough-going that he is sometimes led into difficult positions; but his adroitness in retrieving a blunder amounts almost to genius. Very rarely, when the odds have to be reckoned up, is he found at a disadvantage. Though Sir William Harcourt never mimics his language, and does not measure the blows which he delivers, he is personally a prime favourite with the House. His buoyant humour, his keen enjoyment of a rough-and-tumble fight, and his complete freedom from bitterness or the petty vices of the politician, commend him to an assembly which loves, above all things, to be interested and amused. For an out-and-out partisan, as Sir William Harcourt confessedly is, he occupies a position such as has rarely been held by a prominent statesman.

Another favourite amongst the political leaders in the House of Commons of to-day is Mr. John Morley. Though his views on the great questions that are uppermost are strongly at variance with the prevailing current of political thought in the House, there is no one who is listened to with greater respect, or for whom a keener admiration is felt. The literary graces with which he clothes his speeches lend them a distinction of an uncommon kind.



*Portrait by E. J. B. S. W.*

THE RIGHT HON. SIR WILLIAM VERNON HARCOURT,

Solicitor-General in 1870-71; Home Secretary, 1880-85; and Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1885-90 and 1892-3.

But what gives him his ascendancy is the transparent sincerity of his convictions and the utter absence of anything approaching self-seeking in his actions. His is a personality sufficiently unfamiliar on the political stage to win the tribute of an extended homage. Remarkable, however, as is the position Mr. Morley occupies, it cannot be said that his career in the House of Commons has been a success in a Parliamentary sense. In debate, he has shown great intellectual ability and a complete grasp of his subject. But there has, for the most part, been wanting in his utterances that mental dexterity and, perhaps, political adaptability which are essential to a thorough-going triumph in the House of Commons. Where the duties of leadership have devolved upon Mr. Morley, his weaknesses have been particularly conspicuous. He has displayed a want of touch with the realities of the situation which has detracted from his authority and given to his direction of affairs a feebleness incompatible with success. Still, his reputation as a Parliamentarian stands higher than that of any distinguished literary man who has occupied a seat in the House, with the sole exception, perhaps, of Macaulay.

Of quite a different type from Mr. Morley is Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who now for many years has held a leading position in the House. As a representative of the landed interest he sat as a supporter of Mr. Disraeli as far back as 1864. His political ideals are for the most part those of the period of Conservative ascendancy which followed shortly afterwards. A man



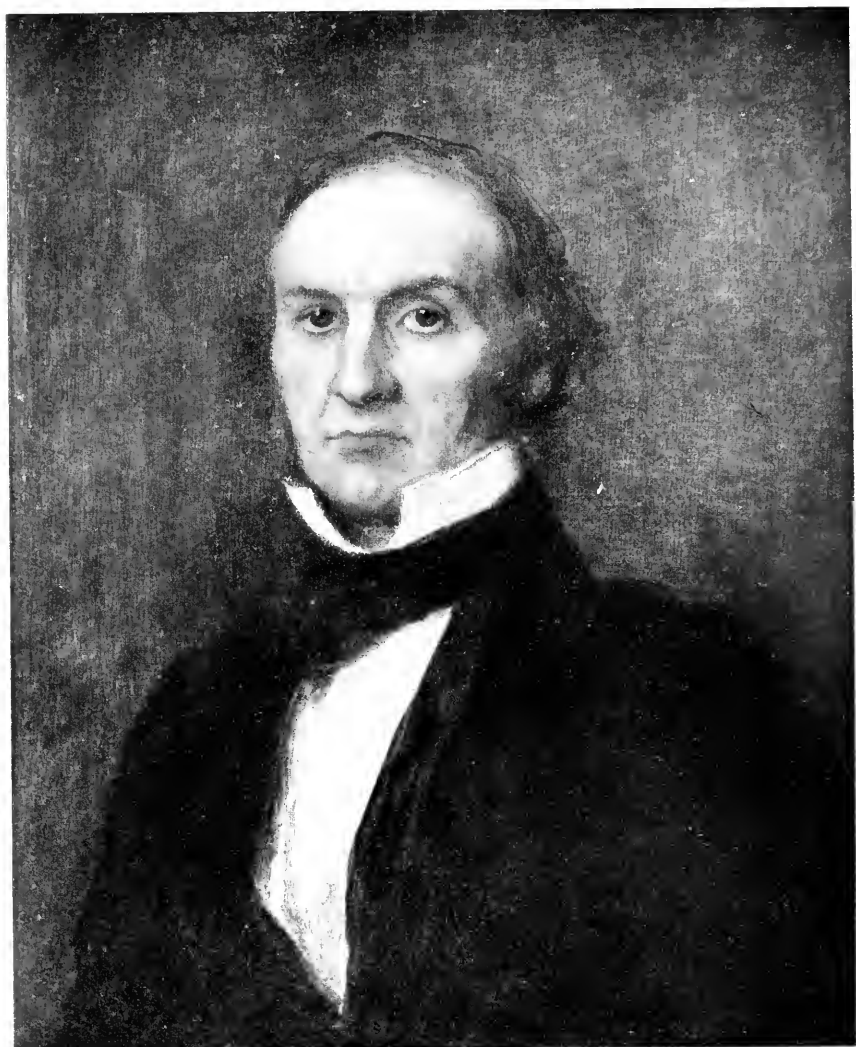
*Portrait photo by the Biograph Studio.*

SIR BENJAMIN STONE, M.P. FOR EAST BIRMINGHAM.

A popular politician whose leisure has been occupied in securing a complete photographic record of the Palace of Westminster and other national buildings.

of strong practical bent of mind, he has no sympathy with the sentimental or philosophical order of politics. He has a scorn for subterfuges and half measures, and is no believer in the notion that language was given to conceal thoughts. He is, in fine, just a plain country gentleman of the old school, with his political leanings and personal predilections. With an official experience extending back to 1868 and embracing the Chief Secretaryship for Ireland, the Presidency of the Poor Law Board, the Presidency of the Board of Trade, the Colonial Secretaryship, the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and the Leadership of the House, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach could not fail to wield a considerable authority over his brother members. But his position does not rest alone on his past record. The House likes his fine straight-forward character, his hatred of shams, his contempt for truckling, and, if the truth must be told, it has a sneaking admiration for that sharpness of tongue by which he is accustomed to flavour his sentiments. Its partiality, no doubt, is of a rather reverent order, as that of the pupil for the schoolmaster who





*Portrait painted by Sir John Everett Millais, 1866.*

# WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

British statesman, one of the greatest of the office of Prime Minister, and who, dying on May 19, 1898, was buried in Westminster Abbey on May 25 following.

is "a beast, but a just beast." But of its strength and universality there is no sort of question.

No survey of the great Parliamentary leaders of the close of the Victorian era would be complete which did not include the present Duke of Devonshire. Though as a member of the Peers' Chamber his Grace was in the closing years of the late Queen's life withdrawn from the thick of the political fray, he fixed an indelible mark on the work and life of the Victorian period. Not only has he filled all but the highest position in the State, but even the highest might have been his had he listened merely to the promptings of ambition. Moreover, his name is imperishably associated, as leader, with one of the mightiest political convulsions recorded in the annals of the country. Many and varying are the estimates which have been formed of his statesmanship. But political friend and foe alike are agreed in yielding to him the attributes of a high-minded and patriotic public man. Even when the wisdom of the policy he has pursued has been most fiercely assailed, calumny has never whispered a suggestion that his course has been directed by other than the purest motives. The great position which his Grace has attained is due to these eminent personal qualities quite as much as to any special aptitude for high political affairs. There is, indeed, hardly an instance in modern times in which a statesman of the first rank has achieved that position with less showy talents. His Grace lacks all the requisites of a great orator. His style is cold and unemotional, his utterance at times almost indistinct, and the matter of his speeches unadorned with any literary grace. He is just a plain, common-sense Englishman, who has a straightforward story to tell, and scorns to stoop to any artifice to enforce its lessons. Still, though not brilliant in the common acceptance of the term, the Duke of Devonshire, or the Marquis of Hartington (as he then was), was a great power in the House of Commons during the thirty-four years he sat there. His fine practical genius was seen at its best in the trying times which followed Mr. Gladstone's retirement in 1875, when, as the Liberal leader, he had to keep together a beaten and dispirited party, conscious at all times of the presence on his flank of a vigilant and impetuous guardian of Liberal traditions, who might at any moment intervene, and by so doing fatally undermine his authority. The cleverness of Lord Hartington's leadership during this period, there can be no doubt, paved the way for the great triumph of the Liberal cause at the polls in 1880.



*From the drawing by Sir John Tenniel, published in "Punch," August 27th, 1881, by permission of Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew & Co., Ltd.*

**"OCT OF THE WOOD."**

A great cartoon symbolising the triumph achieved by Mr. Gladstone in the passing of the Irish Land Act.



*From a photo by Metell & Fox.*

THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM ST. JOHN FREMANTLE BRODRICK,

A rising statesman who filled the office of Secretary for War during the greater part of the South African War period.

would probably make as bold a leader as the best of his predecessors. In his relations with his opponents he has carefully maintained the honourable traditions which have grown up about the Leadership of the Opposition. Nothing could have been happier or in better taste than the graceful tribute to Mr. Balfour previously referred to—a tribute which extracted from the foreign Press an expression of envious admiration.

Amongst Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's immediate associates calling for special reference are Mr. Asquith, Sir Henry Fowler, and Sir Edward Grey. The first-named has perhaps had the most interesting career of the trio. Singularly enough, he owed his admission to the front rank of politicians to a purely legal achievement. As a junior counsel for the defence in the Parnell Commission it fell to his lot to cross-examine one of the principal witnesses for the prosecution, and he performed his work with such cleverness that public attention was fastened upon him, and from that time forward his path, both professional and political, was easy. Mr. Gladstone, with a keen appreciation of the value of new blood, appointed him Home Secretary when he formed his Administration in 1892, and on Lord Rosebery's accession to power he was continued in the office. His administration was a marked success—firm, yet conciliatory, and energetic without trace of fussiness. In his handling of a particularly critical

Parliament has known many more brilliant figures, but it has rarely, if ever, been acquainted with one more un-selfish or less marked by the ignobler features of statesmanship.

The Leader of the Opposition, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, fills by virtue of his abilities as well as by right of position a conspicuous place in the records of the later Victorian Parliaments. His talents are more solid than showy, and political accident quite as much as strength of character has put him at the head of the forces of Liberalism in the House. Nevertheless, he has won the title to rank high in the roll of eminent men who at different times have led the forces of Opposition in the popular chamber. Astuteness in political strategy has been his strong point. Often with limited resources and under discouraging conditions he has won political successes of no insignificant kind. It has been his misfortune to occupy the Leadership at a period when events have torn his party with dissension, and the necessity of reconciling the interests of opposing sections has given to his pronouncements a want of decision, and occasionally a contradictoriness which has excited sharp criticism. But he does not lack genius for direction, and under happier conditions he





*Portrait by J. Russell & Sons, Baker Street, W.*

**THE RIGHT HON. SPENCER COMPTON CAVENDISH, EIGHTH DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G.**

The Liberal Unionist Leader who, as Marquis of Hartington, sat in the House of Commons from 1857 to 1891. He led the Liberal party from 1875 to 1880 and at different times. Has filled the offices of Secretary for War, Postmaster-General, Secretary for India, and Lord President of the Council.



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

THE RIGHT HON. HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH.

Home Secretary in Mr. Gladstone's last Administration, and in the Administration of Lord Rosebery

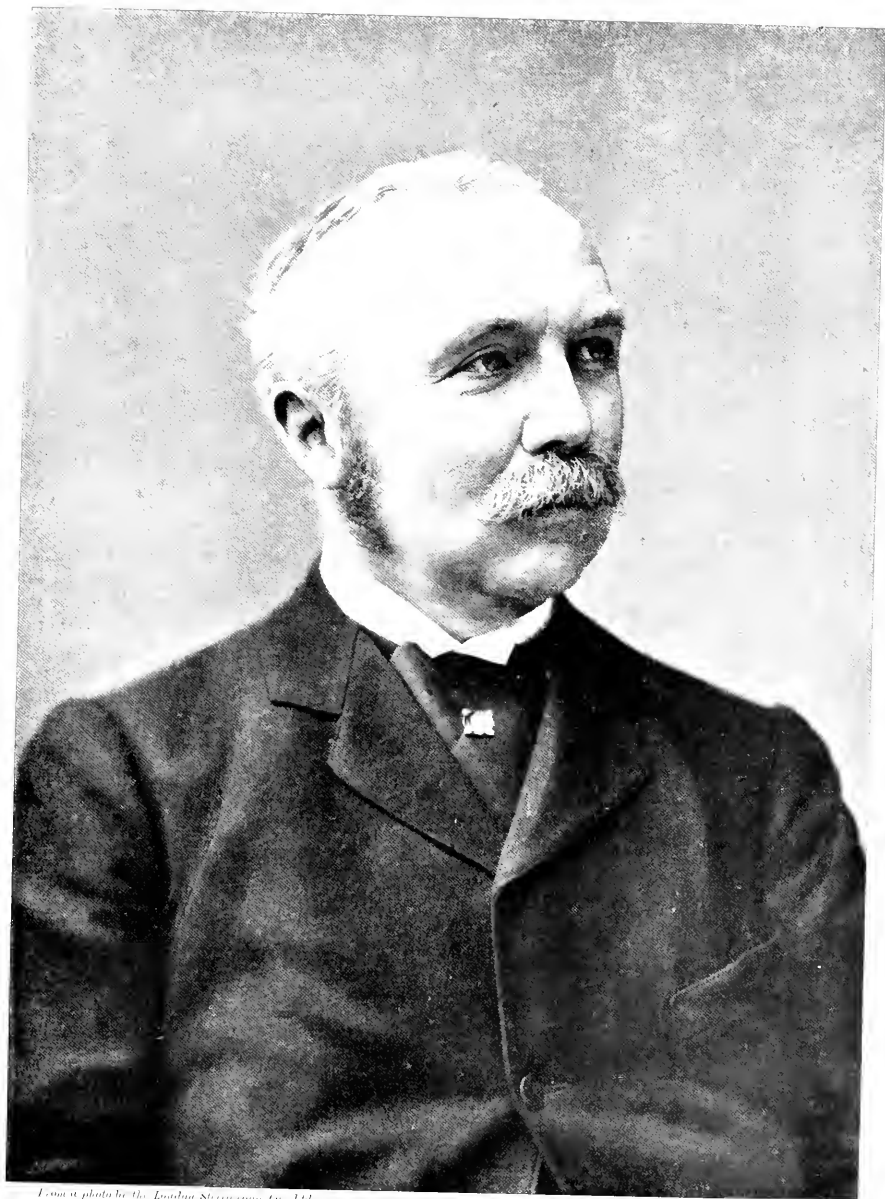
situation developed at the mining district of Featherstone by some strike riots he evinced statesmanlike qualities of the highest kind. It is rather by virtue of his services rendered in this capacity than by his performances on the floor of the House that he has secured the eminent position he occupies. His style is a little too forensic for the taste of the members. His manner, moreover, lacks the fire which is looked for in the popular Parliamentary orator. Nevertheless, he has the ear of the House to a flattering degree, and his reputation as a debater is steadily rising.

In some respects Sir Henry Fowler resembles Mr. Asquith. A hard-headed, unemotional man, steeped in law, the intricacies of which, as a family solicitor, he is thoroughly acquainted with, he impresses by weight rather than the brilliancy of his talents. He is the "safe man" of his party. Whoever may be guilty of political indiscretion or extravagance, he can always be relied on to take and maintain a level view of things. As President of the Local Government Board, and later as Secretary for India in Lord Rosebery's Administration, he displayed consummate tact and judgment, and won the respect of men of all parties by his broad-minded way of treating questions which came before him for solution. Oratory

is not his forte, but he has few equals in the House in making a lucid and business-like statement on a complicated question of policy. One or two of his speeches delivered during his tenure of the Indian Secretaryship are amongst the finest Ministerial expositions of Indian policy ever made in the House. On the whole there are few Parliamentary leaders who are more trusted by the great mass of business men than Sir Henry Fowler.

In a different sphere Sir Edward Grey, the last of the trio named, enjoys a similar measure of confidence. His special province is foreign affairs, to the study of which he has brought a keen intellect and a vigorous and comprehensive understanding. Trained under Lord Rosebery, one of the ablest of the Victorian Foreign Secretaries, he has developed into an expert authority on all questions bearing upon the external relations of the country. His statesmanlike utterances, breathing as they do the spirit of responsibility, are listened to with respectful attention in the House, and they do not pass unnoticed in the Chancelleries of Europe. Few politicians in recent times have, in fact, obtained a more enviable position as an authority on foreign affairs than Sir Edward Grey. It is not, however, in this capacity alone that the young baronet has made his Parliamentary reputation. In the discussion of general politics he has manifested an ability of no common kind. An incisive and ready speaker, thoroughly well informed on all questions, and possessing all the advantages which attach to a pleasing presence, he ranks amongst the best debaters in the House. The widespread impression is that he will go far and accomplish much if he can conquer a certain easiness of disposition which prevents him at times from making the most of his opportunities.

Two other comparatively young politicians in the front rank who must be mentioned are the Hon. Wm. St. John F. Brodrick and Mr. George Wyndham. Both have won their way



*From a photo by the London Stereoscopic Co., Ltd.*

THE RIGHT HON. SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, G.C.B.,

Financial Secretary to the War Office, 1871-74 and 1880-82; Secretary to the Admiralty, 1882-84; Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1884-85; Secretary for War in 1886 and from 1892-95; Leader of the Opposition.

to Cabinet positions at what nowadays must be regarded as an early age; both have held executive positions at a period of exceptional stress and difficulty. Mr. Brodrick has the advantage of seniority. Born in 1856, he entered the House as member for West Surrey in 1880, while Mr. Wyndham did not come into the world until 1863, and he was not seen in the House until 1889, when he was returned for Dover. In an official sense, however, the seniority is more apparent than real, for though Mr. Brodrick was appointed Financial Secretary to the War Office in 1886, Mr. Wyndham as early as 1887 formed an official connection by accepting an appointment as chief secretary to Mr. Balfour, then Chief Secretary for Ireland. Mr. Brodrick earned his promotion to the important office of War Secretary, to which he was appointed on the formation of Lord Salisbury's third Administration, by a long period of probation in subordinate positions; but the more immediate cause of his good fortune, it may be presumed, was the conspicuous part he played in exploding the famous cordite charge which blew up Lord Rosebery's Administration. In this matter he evinced great tactical skill, and this, with more solid qualities shown in the ordinary work of the House,



From a sketch by F. Carruthers Gould.

THE LATE SIR JOHN MACLURE

("The Whitehead Torpedo"). A clever caricature of a familiar figure in the later Victorian Parliaments.



From a photo by Elliott & Fry, Baker Street, W.

MR. GEORGE WYNDHAM, M.P.,

One of the most promising of the younger school of statesmen who has made his mark in Irish administration.

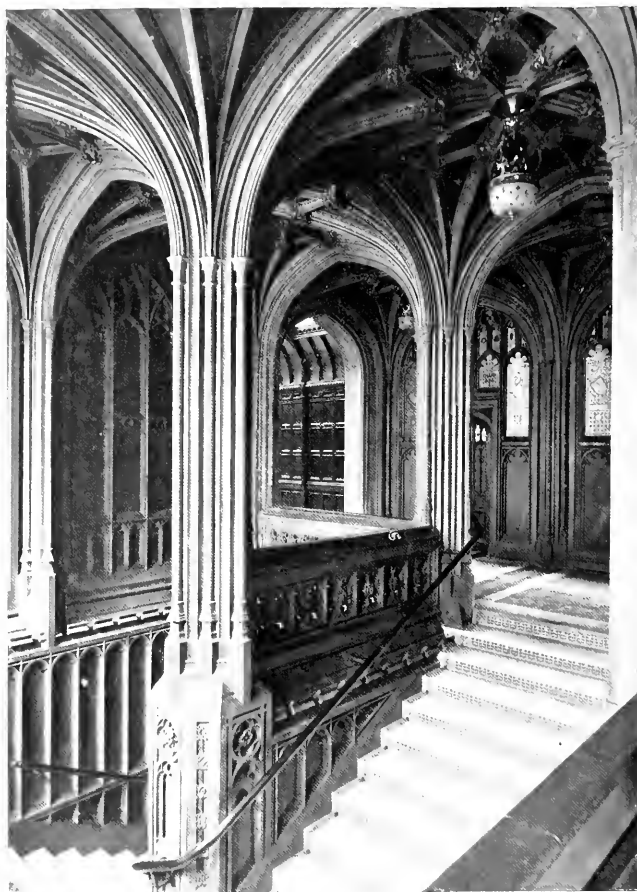
commended him to favourable attention when new blood was being introduced into the higher Unionist official ranks. The way in which he met the crisis of the great South African war indicated that the confidence reposed in him was not misplaced. Upon certain features of the administration of the War Office in this period of stress and storm there has been abundant criticism, but in the main the verdict has been that the young Minister has come out successfully from the trying ordeal which he was called upon to face.

His colleague and friend, Mr. Wyndham, has, in the agitated field of Irish politics, achieved no less distinction. As Chief Secretary he has had to deal with a revival of the Irish Land War under embarrassing circumstances. With a judgment which has never failed, and a courage which has not faltered, he has pursued a policy at once firm and conciliatory, winning the admiration of his friends and earning the respect of even his bitterest opponents. Time has yet to write the full record of his measures; but it may be safely predicted that, in the long list of Irish Chief Secretaries, his name will stand high for earnestness, patience, and devotion to the best ideals of government. A circumstance which has added to Mr.



*From a photo by Elliott & Fry, Baker Street, W.*

ARCHIBALD PHILIP PRIMROSE, FIFTH EARL OF ROSEBERY, K.G.,  
Foreign Secretary in Mr. Gladstone's 1886 and 1892 Administrations; Premier in 1894.



*Lenscap photo by W. S. Crapnell. Copyright, Hetchinson & Co.*

#### THE GRAND STAIRCASE, HOUSE OF LORDS.

*One of the finest architectural features of the interior of the new Palace of Westminster.*

Wyndham's popularity is the charm of his oratory. His speeches have an agreeable literary flavour, and they are delivered with the effectiveness which comes of a pleasing, well-modulated voice and a striking presence. With longer experience Mr. Wyndham may hope to occupy a position of high authority and influence in the popular chamber. As it is, amongst the younger school of politicians on the Unionist benches there is not one who is more generally liked or more highly admired.

The *personnel* of the House generally presents many points of interest — points which would call for notice if this survey of the Victorian Parliaments were designed to be exhaustive. As the intention, however, is merely to sketch in the broadest outline the history of this eventful period the subject must be

left where it is. All that need be said further is that though the ravages of time have bereft the House of the political giants who occupied the Parliamentary stage in the middle part of the late Queen's reign, and their places have not yet been completely filled, the standard of talent is as high as ever it was, and in the matter of intellect the present Parliament has probably an advantage over its predecessors.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### *THE PRECINCTS OF THE PALACE—THE PALACE YARD, ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH, AND THE CHAPTER HOUSE.*

ALMOST as interesting historically as the Palace of Westminster is the area surrounding it. Seeing that the spot has for centuries been the centre from which all great national movements have emanated, it could hardly have been otherwise. The Palace and the Abbey, each in its separate sphere, and the two collectively, have drawn as a magnet all the forces of the country—intellectual, social, political, and religious—within their range of influence. In old times, pilgrims, not all in the odour of sanctity, resorted to Westminster, as they did to Canterbury, to find in its holy shades either solace for the spirit or immunity from the law. Similarly, courtiers and place-hunters, poetasters and politicians, directed their faces to the grey old walls of the Palace in pursuit of fame, or the shadow of it. So it came about that this little area of British ground in process of time accumulated traditions which in their breadth of interest and historic continuity vie with those of the square mile eastwards in which the greatness of our commercial empire has been built up.

It is, of course, in the Palace "Yards," Old and New, that the chief interest is focussed. What these were like outwardly in remote times we have shown in a previous chapter, but their connection with the events transacted within the walls of the adjacent building is such as to demand more detailed treatment. Both have a history of an absorbing kind—a history which fascinates while it repels, and which in its sunniest aspects appeals more to our sense of the picturesque than to our lighter instincts. Froissart once declared that we English



*From a contemporary drawing.*

#### OLD PALACE YARD IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Amongst the changes in Old Palace Yard the disappearance of the houses about Henry VII.'s Chapel will be noted.

take our pleasures sadly. His views were possibly to some extent formed from what he saw on this identical spot, and if so, it is not difficult to agree with him. Amusement was found in the jousts and tourneys in which the brutal elements were only thinly veneered by the light-o'-love passions stirred in the hearts of fair spectators, who found in these contests a relief from the tedium of mediæval life. Sometimes it happened that the arena was turned to quasi-judicial uses—by putting to the trial of battle the question of the guilt or innocence of some knightly subject of the King. Such an episode, of which New Palace Yard was the scene, occurred in the reign of Richard II., on June 7th, 1380. The combatants were Sir John Amnesley, Knight, and Thomas Katrington (or Caterton), and issue was joined on a charge of treason preferred by the latter against the former in connection with the surrender of the



J. T. Smith del., 1808.

BUILDINGS ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF NEW PALACE YARD.

On the left of the picture is seen the water gate which formerly gave access to New Palace Yard from the river. The third door to the right led to the Star Chamber, which was on the first floor of the building above.

Castle of St. Sauveur le Viscount in Normandy. Holinshed supplies a picturesque account of the scene. On the morning fixed, the King, the Lords, and many others assembled at a place in front of the Palace where the lists were set up. The knight, "armed and mounted on a faire courser, seemellie trapped," came forward, and a little later the defendant was summoned. At the third call he appeared on the scene "riding on a courser trapped with traps imbrodered with his armes. At his approaching to the lists he alighted from his horse, lest, according to the lawe of armes, the Constable should have challenged the horse, if he had entered within the lists; but his shifting nothing availed him, for the horse, after his maister was alighted beside him, ran up and down by the railles, now thrusting his head over and now both head and breast; so that the Earle of Buckingham, because he was High Constable of England, claimed the horse afterwards, declaring that he would have so much of him as had appeared over the railles, and so the horse was adjudged unto him."



When the parties had all entered the lists, Katrington, "whose conscience was thought not to be cleare," took exception to the terms arranged for the contest. This so enraged the Duke of Lancaster, who was managing the business, that he threatened that if Katrington did not accept the conditions he would be adjudged guilty of treason and immediately executed. Thus coerced, the defendant declared his readiness and even eagerness to fight with the knight. It was a decision which only did him bare justice, for "he was indeed a mightie man of stature, whereas the knight amongst those that were of a meane stature was one of the least." Both now declared on their oaths the truth of the cause for which they fought, and subsequently devoutly offered up prayers. These preliminaries over, the fight began. It was an obstinately contested struggle, first with spears, then with swords, and lastly with daggers. After a time the knight threw his adversary, but, missing his aim, the prostrate esquire seized his chance and threw himself upon his assailant. The King, seeing the position of affairs, gave orders that the combatants should be parted, and this was done. But upon the urgent petition of the knight the two were placed upon the ground in the same position in which they had been when the King intervened. It soon appeared that the esquire was totally unable to take advantage of his position. He fainted and fell from his seat, and it was thought he would have died on the spot. However, "after a little time the esquier began to come to himselfe, and lifting up his eyes, began to hold up his head and to cast a ghostlie look on everie one about him; which, when it was reported to the knight, he cometh to him armed as he was (for he had put off no piece since the beginning of the fight) and speaking to him, called him traitor, and false perjured man, asking of him if he durst trie the battell with him againe; but the esquier having neither sense nor spirit whereby to make answer, proclamation was made that the battell was ended and everie one might go to his lodging." Adjudged guilty in the eyes of all, the unfortunate Katrington became delirious, and on the next day "he yielded up the ghost," his body being afterwards hanged at Tyburn.

In both New and Old Palace Yards many tragic scenes have been witnessed in the course of their strange, eventful history. Through the former have passed in sombre procession the long series of State criminals or victims whose doom has been pronounced in Westminster Hall. In one or other of them not a few of those individuals have been brought to the scaffold. Here also have been witnessed many of those refinements of judicial cruelty which in a former barbarous age were deemed essential to the due administration of justice. The pillory and the stocks were supporters of the scaffold; the whipping-post and the branding-iron were the accompaniments of the fire which consumed the author's libellous books and pamphlets in the Palace enclosures.

Many familiar historical figures flit before us in the phantasmagoria which the sinister records of this corner of Old Westminster supply. Fastened in the stocks on a scaffold before Westminster Hall we see, on a November day in 1497, that unfortunate impostor, Perkin Warbeck,



THE TILT-YARD, WESTMINSTER.

Where the jousts arranged by the Kings of England were held for several centuries.

surrounded by a hostile crowd, who, as he reads his confession, assail him with "innumerable reproaches, mocks, and scorings." Another picture is that of William Prynne standing in the pillory in 1634 and having his famous work, the "*Histrio Mastrix*," burned before his face. We also catch glimpses of Titus Oates and Wilkes similarly exposed to obloquy, and of Guy Fawkes and three of his co-conspirators suffering the terrible penalty of their treason. There is record, too, of the execution in 1510, during the sitting of Parliament, of one Newbolt, a Yeoman of the King's Guard, who, having slain in the Palace of Westminster a servant of Lord Willoughby, was ordered to instant justice by the King, although the man was a great favourite of his. Yet another memorable episode of which history tells is the beheading in 1585 "before the Palace Gate," during the sitting of the Parliament of which he was a member, of Dr. Parry, a Welshman, who had incurred the hostility of the Crown by stigmatising a bill against Jesuits "a cruel, bloody, and desperate law."

But of all the scenes which are passed under review, that which most fascinates is the tragic end of Raleigh. Brought to the scaffold in Old Palace Yard broken in health with long imprisonment, but with spirit undaunted, we see the great man on that Michaelmas Day, 1618, slowly making his way through a subdued crowd. An old and devoted friend darts forward to offer him a farewell greeting, and is repulsed by the guards. "Prithee, never fear, Beeston; I shall have a place," exclaims the prisoner. "Farewell, my lords," he adds, as he acknowledges the sad salutations of a party of friends. "I have a long journey to go, and I must e'en say 'Good-bye.'" Then, having mounted the scaffold, he said: "Now I am going to God"; and turning to the executioner and gently touching the axe, he observed: "This is a sharp medicine, but it will cure all diseases." Trembling with agitation, the headman shrank from the block. "What dost thou fear? Strike, man!" exclaimed the intrepid Raleigh. The axe fell, and the great crime was consummated. Thereafter "the bleeding relics" of the patriot were privately interred under the high altar of St. Margaret's Church, with the exception of the head, which was taken away by Lady Raleigh, and twenty years afterwards buried by Carow Raleigh at West Horsley Church, Surrey.

While the memories of Old and New Palace Yards are of a tragic cast, they are not wanting in the element of sensationalism. From the earliest times popular movements have found here their freest vent. What Trafalgar Square is to-day, that was this small area about

the Palace of Westminster in olden times. When in 1641 the current of feeling against Strafford was running high, the precincts of the House of Lords were invaded by a mob of some six thousand armed citizens clamouring for "justice against Lord Strafford." About the same period a demonstration was made by a number of "gentlemen and tradesmen's wives" from the City, who presented a petition against Archbishop Laud, "then lying in the Tower, yet not receiving his deserved punishment." Butler in *Hudibras* alludes to the incident in the couplet—

The oyster women locked their fish up,  
And trudg'd away to cry "No Bishop."



WILLIAM PRYNNE.

The Puritan pamphletter, who stood in the pillory in New Palace Yard in 1634.

The female zealots crowded about the door of the House, and Sergeant-major Skippon, the commander of the guard, applied to the House to know what to do with them, they telling him "that where there was one now there would be five hundred the next day, and that it was as good for them to die here as at home." The House instructed the sergeant to "speak them fair and send them home

again," their petition being received and read.<sup>1</sup> Two years later an immense number of women, wearing white favours in their hats, swarmed into New Palace Yard, crying out: "Give us that dog Pym!" They were allowed to demonstrate for a time unmolested; but when they accompanied their verbal appeals with brickbats, the train bands who were defending the approaches were compelled to fire in self-defence. The political dames then dispersed.

The eighteenth century witnessed several tumultuous assemblies in and about the Palace Yards. One was on April 10th, 1733, when an immense crowd of citizens attended at Westminster to petition against Sir Robert Walpole's Excise Bill,

and conducted themselves so threateningly that a serious riot was feared. A further and more serious invasion took place in June, 1780, when Lord George Gordon with a howling mob endeavoured to intimidate the Houses of Parliament to repeal the law of Catholic Emancipation passed in 1778. It is difficult in these days to picture the condition of downright anarchy which existed on the very threshold of the Legislative Chamber owing to the supineness of the authorities on this memorable occasion. There were two separate visits of the mob to St. Stephen's. The first was paid on June 2nd, as the outcome of a resolution passed at a meeting of the Protestant Association, of which Lord George Gordon was President, deciding to present a petition to Parliament for the repeal of the obnoxious Act. Marching in four divisions, the demonstrators proceeded to the House of Commons, swarming into the lobbies and blocking all the approaches to the Legislative Chamber. The petition was duly presented to the House by Lord George Gordon, and after a debate it was decided to adjourn consideration of it until June 6th. Meanwhile, the waiting crowd became noisy and insulting. Members of both Houses who fell into their clutches, to escape personal injury were forced to



*From an engraving after the painting by Zuccaro.*

SIR WALTER RALEIGH,

The great Elizabethan hero, who was executed in New Palace Yard in 1618.

<sup>1</sup> "Parliamentary History," vol. ii. p. 1073.



*From an engraving after the picture by Sir Anthony van Dyck.*

WILLIAM LAUD, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

The eminent High Church divine whose policy in the reign of Charles I. gave rise to great popular agitations.

retired. The second invasion of the rabble was on June 6th. On that day an enormous mob gathered in and about the legislative precincts, assuming a more and more menacing attitude as the sitting progressed. The House maintained a firm and dignified front in the face of the peril which threatened it. Recognising that "no act of theirs could be legal whilst the House was under apprehensions from the daring spirit of the people," they resolved "that to obstruct and insult the members whilst coming to or going from the House, and to endeavour by force to compel them to declare themselves in favour of or against any proposition then depending, was a gross breach of the privileges of the House." After registering this protest the members adjourned. But by this time the rioters had got beyond the influence of any minatory declarations such as this. For three days they created a veritable Reign of Terror in London, burning and sacking, and perpetrating all kinds of outrages. It was not until the entire military force available had been called out, and between three and four hundred persons killed or mortally wounded, that the formidable rising against authority was suppressed. The fantastic Lord George Gordon was put upon his trial for treason as the author of the riots, but he was acquitted on the ground that his conduct did not justify the charge. Less fortunate than he, some fifty of the leading rioters suffered the extreme penalty of the law for their connection with the disturbances.

The period of the Chartist agitation also witnessed some stirring scenes in the neighbourhood of the Palace; and there was again an anxious time for the authorities when, on the introduction of Mr. Lowe's ill-starred Match Tax, several thousand matchmakers from the East End attempted to march on the House of Commons. In the most recent times the police have so rigorously enforced the regulations which prohibit the approach of any considerable body of

wear blue cockades—the distinctive badge of the Protestant Association—and to join in the "No Popery" cry. The more daring spirits amongst the rioters even endeavoured to force the doors of the two Houses of Parliament whilst the members were in debate. The way was blocked by several resolute legislators, who were prepared to resist the invasion of the mob to the last extremity. One of the party—General Conway—reminded Lord George Gordon, who had come out of the Legislative Chamber to harangue his followers, that the entrance to the House was narrow and that he wore a soldier's sword, and that that day all members were in arms. Colonel Gordon, another of the party, addressing Lord George Gordon added, "Will you bring these rascals in? Harkee, the first man who enters I will run, not him, but you, through the body." The stout attitude assumed by these courageous defenders of the House's liberties had the effect of staying the inrush of the invaders. Eventually, on the appearance of the military, they discreetly

demonstrators to the vicinity of the seat of the Legislature, that the history of this branch of the subject may be regarded as closed.

Apart from political turmoil associated with the work of Parliament, the Palace Yards were at frequent intervals for a long course of years the cockpit of the rival factions concerned in the Westminster elections. The hustings were actually erected for a long period in New Palace Yard, and if a poll were demanded it was held in Westminster Hall, where for weeks at a stretch, under frequently the most tumultuous conditions, the "free and enlightened" electors of Westminster registered their votes. With the lapse of time, so embarrassing did the Westminster electioneering become to legislators that the hustings were transferred to Covent Garden. But the precincts of the Palace of Westminster continued long afterwards to share in the boisterous excitement which accompanied the elections. The most remarkable contest was probably that of 1784, when Fox contested the constituency against Sir Cecil Wray and Admiral Lord Hood, the Court nominees. The polling lasted for forty days, and was marked by political excesses which were notable even in those days of riotous elections. It was at this famous election that the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire wooed and won votes for the popular nominee by exchanging kisses for promises of support. A squib issued at the time sets forth in amusing fashion the dangers of this fascinating form of canvassing:—

#### WESTMINSTER.

To be hired for the day,  
Several pairs of ruby pouting lips, of the First Quality,  
To be kissed by run Dukes, queer Dukes, Butchers,  
Draymen, Dustmen, and Chimney-sweepers.

Please to inquire at Devon & Co.'s Crimson Pouting Warehouse, Piccadilly.

Then follow several stanzas setting forth in halting rhyme the varied attractions of the election. The Duchess of Devonshire is thus referred to:—

Arrayed in matchless beauty, Devon's fair  
In Fox's favour takes a zealous part,  
But, oh! where'er the pilferer comes—beware!  
She supplicates a vote and steals a heart!

Hail, Duchess! first of womankind,  
Far, far you leave your sex behind,  
With you none can compare  
For who but you from street to street  
Would run about a vote to get?  
Thrice, thrice bewitching fair!



From a mezzotint after Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

THE FAMOUS GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE,  
Who played a great part in the political life of the latter half of the  
eighteenth century.

The return of Fox with a majority of 235 votes over Wray, the High Bailiff's refusal to return Fox, the subsequent protracted scrutiny, and Fox's final triumph are matters of political history which need not be dilated upon here. It may be said, however, that the incidents were typical of the intense partisanship which raged at election times in this historic constituency until the reform of Parliament and the rise of important political centres elsewhere deprived Westminster of its commanding position.

Associated with the history of the Palace Yards are the memories, political, social, and literary, of the many coffee-taverns and inns which once existed there. They were the resort of the leading men of the day, who used them much as their modern prototypes do the palatial clubs in Pall Mall and St. James's Street. One of the most famous—perhaps the most famous—was the Turk's Head, or Miles's Coffee-House, in which was held the meetings of the celebrated Rota Club, founded in 1659 by James Harrington, the author of "Oceana." The singular name of the club was derived from a plan, which it was established to promote, for changing a certain number of members of Parliament annually by rotation. Pepys was one of its earliest members, as appears from the following entry in his diary under date January 9th, 1659-60: "Thence I went with Muddiman to the Coffee House and gave 18d. to be entered of the Club." Sir William Petty was another of its distinguished members. Aubrey, in his *Bodleian Letters*, supplies us with an interesting glimpse of the club in action. "In 1659, the beginning of Michaelmas Term," says the author, "Henry Nevill and Harrington had every night a meeting at the (then) Turk's Head, in the New Palace Yard, where they take water,

the next house to the Staires, at one Miles's, where was made purposely a large oval table, with a passage in the middle for Miles to deliver his coffee. About it sat his disciples and the virtuosi. We many times adjourned to the Rhenish Wine House. One time Mr. Stafford and his gang came in drunk from the tavern and affronted the junto; the soldiers offered to kick them down staires, but Mr. Harrington's moderation and persuasion hindered it."

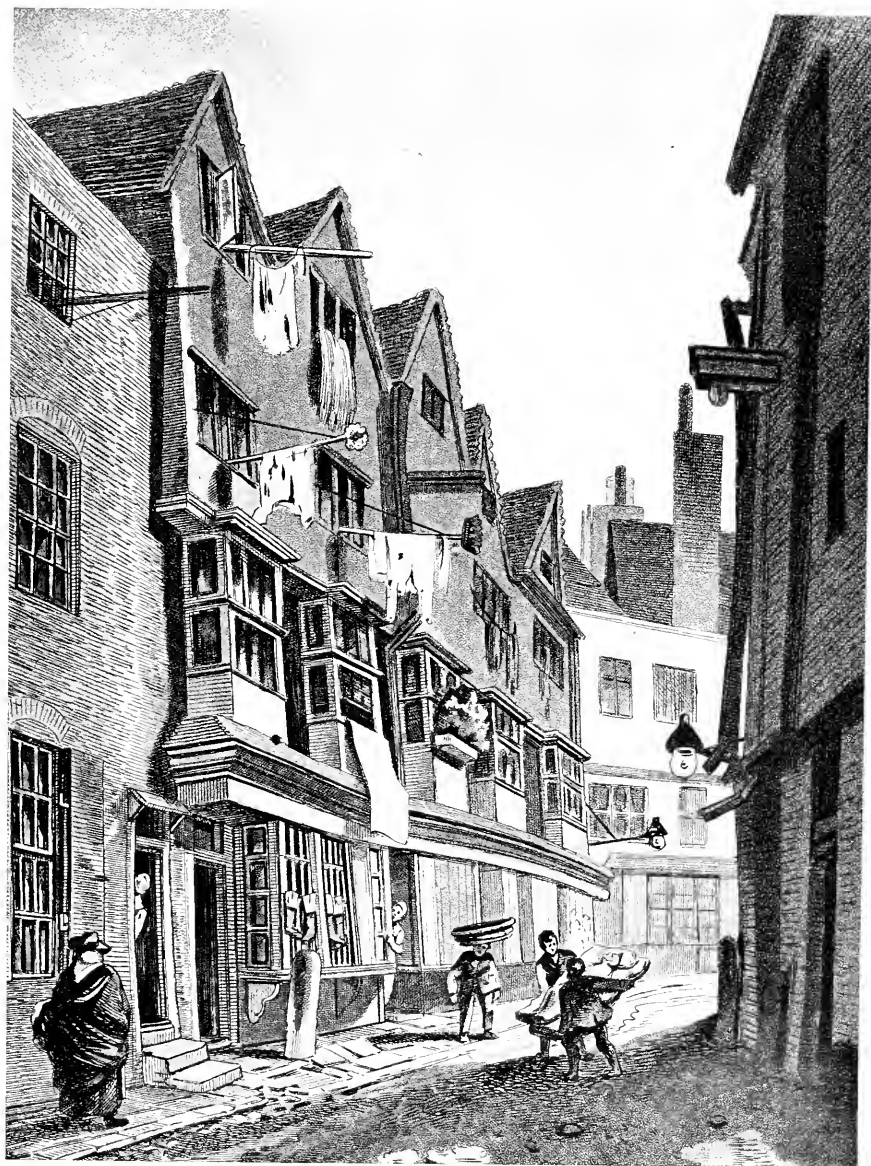
Pepys was a constant visitor to the taverns and coffee-houses about the Palace of Westminster. He was sitting at one of these establishments



From a drawing made by T. H. H. in 1868.

THE BLUE BOAK'S HEAD INN, KING STREET, WESTMINSTER.

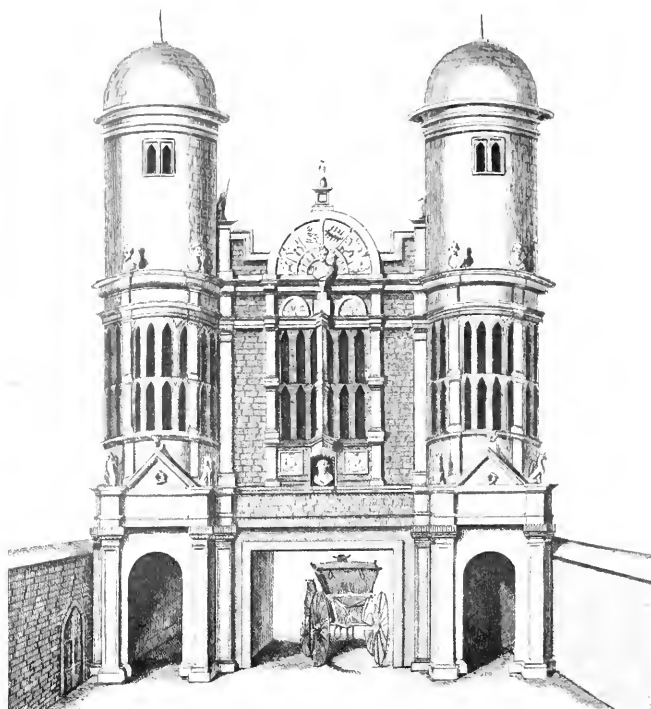
It was in a house in the yard of this inn that Cowell lived during the period that he was a member of Parliament.



*From a drawing made by J. T. Smith in December, 1867.*

#### THE ANCIENT PRECINCTS OF THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER.

View of the southern extremity of Thieving Lane of late years called Bow Street, through which the felons were conveyed to the gate-house which stood at the eastern end of Tothill Street.



*After a print drawn and engraved by G. Vertue, published 1723.*

KING STREET GATE, WESTMINSTER.

Once the main approach to the precincts of the Palace of Westminster. It was demolished in 1723.

were accustomed to pass either in going to or returning from Whitehall. The best known taverns and coffee-houses were, however, in King Street, which for centuries was the main approach to the Houses of Parliament. Here was the Boar's Head, in the yard attached to which was the house occupied by Oliver Cromwell during the period that he was a member of Parliament. The Protector's house was pulled down many years ago, and quite recently the last vestiges of the inn premises were swept away to make room for the great blocks of Government offices that are rising on the site of what was once King Street. Another tavern which achieved fame at a later period was the Bell, at which that well-known association of High Church Tory squires—the October Club—held its meetings, and quaffed their good October ale while they discussed the political questions of the day. The club, which included amongst its members many of the best known men of the day, created a great stir in the early part of the eighteenth century. Its fame even penetrated to the Continent, where books for and against its principles were printed. Its success resulted in the establishment of several similar institutions, the best known of which was the March Club. Eventually these resorts faded out of existence with the rise of other and more imposing centres of political enlightenment and social intercourse farther west.

By far the most interesting of the institutions of New Palace Yard was the Star Chamber, the dread tribunal which occupies so important a place in constitutional history. Many theories have been advanced to account for the peculiar name given to the Chamber. It is surmised by

with Locke and Purcell, hearing a variety of Italian and Spanish songs one evening just before the Restoration, and he describes the scene in his "Diary." "Here out of the windows," says he, "it was a most pleasant sight to see the City, from one end to the other, with a glory about it, so high was the light of the bonfires, and thick round the City, and the bells rang everywhere."

The Rhenish Wine House, previously referred to, was another famous place of resort to which Pepys was very partial. It stood to the north of New Palace Yard, near a door which gave access to the Privy Gardens, through which legislators



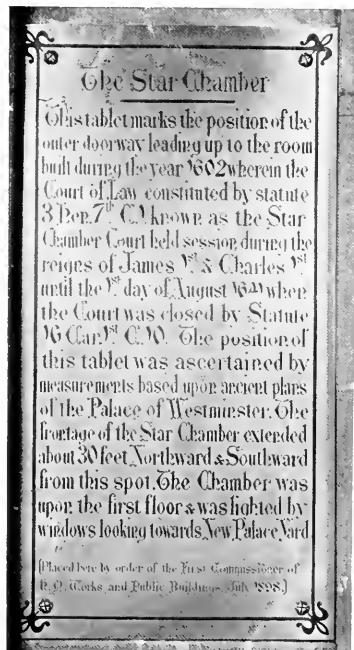
some writers that it had its origin in the Saxon word *stæortn*, to govern. Blackstone suggests that the title came from "the Starr" or "Shetar," the contracts of the Jews with the King which were kept in the Exchequer. The more probable explanation, however, appears to be that the Court anciently sat in a room of the Palace the ceiling of which was adorned with stars. The Court, it is surmised by some writers, was a very ancient one, dating back to early Norman times; but in the form in which it

is best known in history it was established by Henry VII. in the year 1487. Created to facilitate the designs of the King and to more effectually punish his enemies, its functions were to hold trials



OLD STAR CHAMBER, WESTMINSTER.  
Pulled down after the fire of 1834.

without a jury, or the right of appeal, or hearing accused, or having before it any written charge. A Committee of the Privy Council and the two Chief Justices, with the Lord High Chancellor acting as president, formed the Court. The sentences imposed took a variety of forms; but fines, imprisonment, and branding were the punishments it most frequently inflicted. In accordance with the spirit of the age, it occasionally gave to its decrees a whimsical cast, as, for example, on one occasion when a poor fanatic named Traske was brought before it for preaching the sinfulness of eating swine's flesh, it condemned the accused to imprisonment, and ordered that pork should be his sole fare. In Wolsey's day the tribunal was freely employed in aiding by its coercive influence the strong policy which he directed. But it was in the period preceding the Great Rebellion that the Chamber attained to its highest pitch of activity and fame. Its mysterious powers and subversive influences employed by Charles I. in support of what he deemed to be his rights did much to kindle the flame of liberty which was eventually to involve himself and his dynasty in ruin. The last and perhaps most picturesque incident associated with the Court was the sentencing of John Lilburne in 1636 for publishing seditious libels. This worthy was fined £5,000, was ordered to stand in the pillory, and to be whipped from the Fleet Prison to the gate of Westminster Hall. In accordance with the decree he stood in the pillory just outside the Star



TABLET AFFIXED TO MARK THE POSITION OF  
THE OLD STAR CHAMBER.

HOUSE OF

COMMONS



*Mercurii, 10. die Augusti 1803.*  
*Resolvent, Verine Contradictorie*

That do **THANKS** of this **HOUSE** be given  
 to the several Volunteer and Yeomanry Corps of the United Kingdom  
 for the Promptitude and Zeal, with which, at a Crisis the most  
 momentous to their Country, they have presented for its Defence.

*Ordered, Verine Contradictorie.*

**THAT** a Return be prepared to be laid before  
 this House in the next Session of Parliament of all Volunteer and  
 Yeomanry Corps, whose Services shall have been then accepted by  
 His Majesty, describing each Corps; in order that such Return may  
 be entered on the Journals of this House, and the Patriotic Example of  
 such Voluntary Exertions transmitted to Posterity.

*Ordered.*

That **MESPEAKER** do signify the said Resolution  
 and Order, by Letter, to His Majesty's Lieutenant of each County,  
 Riding, and Place, in Great Britain, and to His Excellency the  
 Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

*J. L. D. DOM. COM.*

Respectfully inscribed to the **Volunteers** of the United Kingdom

Engraved, Printed & Coloured by J. D. Smith, Printers in Ball's Court, Chancery, at the Shakespeare Gallery, Pall Mall, near the Horse Guards, and at Messrs. T. Agnew & Sons, Manchester.

AN ENGRAVING OF THE RESOLUTION CONVEYING THE THANKS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TO THE  
 VOLUNTEER AND YEOMANRY CORPS IN THE CRISIS CREATED BY THE THREAT OF A NAPOLEONIC INVASION.

Chamber. He went, he tells us in the narrative he subsequently published, "with a joyful courage," and when he was upon the place of punishment he "made obeisance to the lords" who had acted as his judges, and who apparently were inspecting him from the Star Chamber.

When the Star Chamber was abolished, the historic apartment in which its sittings were held was diverted to ordinary official uses, and remained in much its original state until the clearances necessitated in New Palace Yard for the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament were undertaken in 1836. It was then demolished, and upon the site arose the imposing outlines of Barry's great Gothic building. So completely were all vestiges of the Chamber obliterated, that its precise situation was for a long time a matter of uncertainty. Eventually, however, Sir Reginald Palgrave set all doubts at rest in a paper he prepared on the subject,<sup>1</sup> and now a tablet placed on a wall pier in the centre of the arcade which leads from the District Railway subway to the Privy Councillors' entrance to the House of Commons tells the visitor all that there is to be known. This is the inscription:—

"This tablet marks the position of the outer doorway leading up to the room built during the year 1602, wherein the Court of Law constituted by Statute 3 Henry VII. c. 1, known as the Star Chamber Court, held session during the reigns of James I. and Charles I. until the 1st day of August, 1641, when the Court was closed by Statute 16 Car. I. c. 10.

"The position of this tablet was ascertained by measurements based upon ancient plans of the Palace of Westminster. The frontage of the Star Chamber extended about thirty feet northward and southward from this spot. The Star Chamber was upon the first floor, and was lighted by windows looking towards New Palace Yard."

In reviewing the past history of the Palace Yards, the not indirect connection of the quarter with the Volunteer movement must not be overlooked. In the closing days of the eighteenth century, when the fear of a Napoleonic invasion sent a great wave of patriotism throughout the country, Westminster played a part—and a not inconspicuous part—in the call of the citizens to arms. A fine corps was formed within the city, and in its ranks were found many of the leading inhabitants. The New Palace Yard was a favourite place of assembly of the citizen soldiers. There, under the eyes of the Legislature, they went through their drill, establishing a connection between the Palace of Westminster and the Volunteer movement which exists to this day in the unique privilege accorded to the Queen's Westminster Volunteers—the lineal descendants of the old corps—of drilling in Westminster Hall. It may be assumed that the intimate ties which were formed between Parliament and the old Westminster corps gave an added strength to the cordiality with which, when the storm had blown over, the House of Commons, in a resolution dated August 10th, 1803, tendered its thanks to the yeomanry



*From an engraving by J. Hurbaken.*

JOHN FYFE,

Statesman of the Stuart and Commonwealth period. He was concerned in the arrest of Waller and his fellow-conspirators for their plot against the Parliament in 1642.

<sup>1</sup> *Leisure Hour*, November, 1898.



EDMUND WALLER.

The poet, noted in political history as the author of a plot against the Parliament in 1642.

connection with the House of Commons, it is surmised by Walcott, commenced when St. Stephen's Chapel was diverted from its sacred purposes in the reign of Edward VI. Certain it is that soon after that period arose the custom of members of the House of Commons attending Divine service and partaking of the Communion in the church, as the Peers did in the Abbey. The following entry in the churchwardens' accounts in the year 1627 shows that the religious observances of legislators were conducted in no perfunctory manner: "Item, paid for bread and wine when the Right Honourable the Commons House of Parliament (being 468 persons) received the Communion in the parish church, 1626, x.l. xvijs." "Item, given to Mr. Vincent Peris, curate by their appointment, for his pains in the administration of the Sacrament unto them, x.l."<sup>1</sup> As the total number of members at the time was but 468, it would appear that every single member attended the service.

In the troublous Stuart period, as noted in an earlier chapter, the church was frequently the scene of services at which the House of

and volunteer corps of the United Kingdom "for the promptitude with which, at a crisis the most momentous to their country," they associated for its defence. This resolution, emblazoned with all the ingenuity of the illuminator's art, was circulated throughout the country; and now reproduced in these pages after the lapse of nearly a century, may serve as a reminder that ardour in the country's defence is not a latter-day attribute of patriotism.

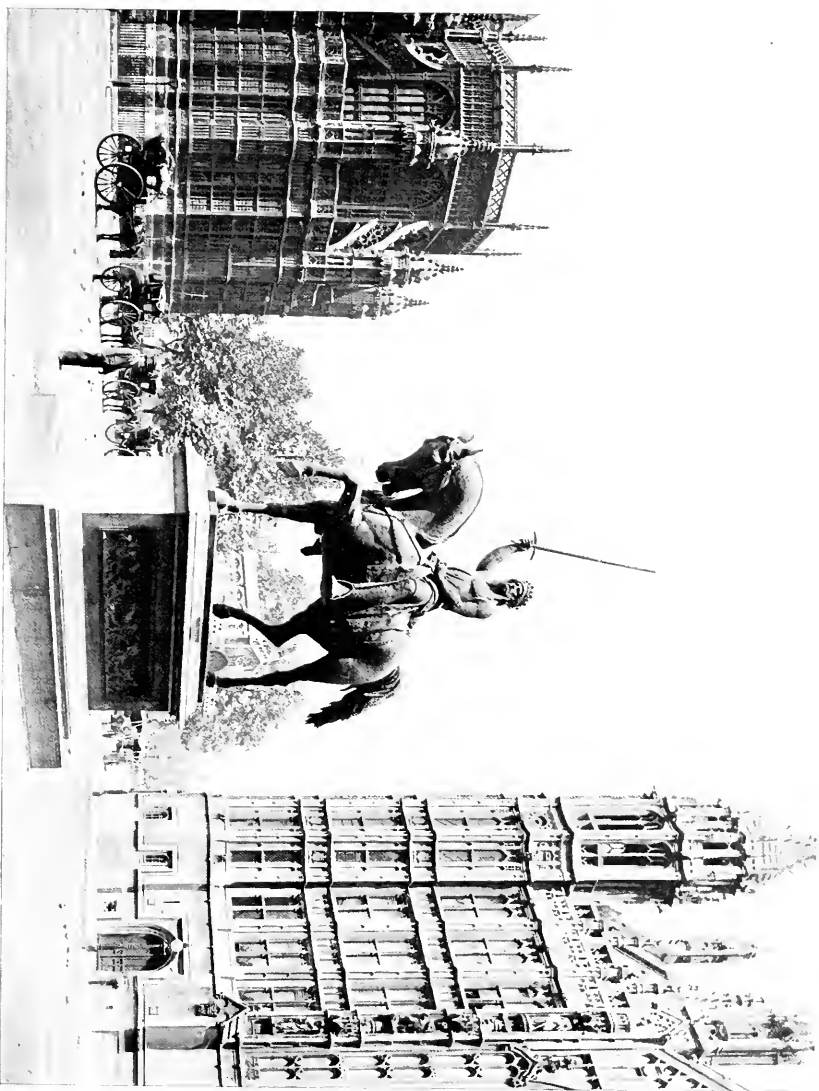
Closely identified with the life of Parliament, and sharing to some extent in its glorious history, is the Church of St Margaret, Westminster. Walcott, the historian of the church, claims for it, with justice, that "with the exception of the Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul's Cathedral there is no other ecclesiastical edifice throughout London and Westminster which can boast a greater antiquity or more interesting foundation." The original building was, there is good reason to believe, erected by Edward the Confessor. It is certain that there was a parish church on the site in the earliest Norman times. The present structure, however, dates no further back than the reign of Edward I., and the greater part of it is of a much later period. Its



HUGH PETERS.

The fanatical Puritan divine and preacher for the Parliament during Commonwealth.

<sup>1</sup> "Westminster Records," p. 55.



*From a photo by Sir Benjamin Stone, M.P.*

STATUE OF RICHARD COEUR DE LION IN OLD PALACE YARD.

The great work of Marcadet, which is generally considered to be the finest piece of statuary about the House of Parliament.

Commons in its corporate capacity assisted. On one fast day—November 17th, 1640—the records tell us that “Dr. Burgess and Mr. Marshall preached before the House, at least seven hours between them, upon Jer. i. 5, and 2 Chron. ii. 2.” It was in the church during a solemn fast that on May 31st, 1642, Pym received the first news of the plot of Edmund Waller, the poet, against Parliament, and it was from its precincts that the preliminary orders were given for the arrest of the conspirators. Later in the same year, on September 25th, 1642, the sacred building was still more closely identified with the cause of the Parliamentarians by the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant within its walls, by both Houses of Parliament, the Assembly of Divines, and the Scottish Commissioners. Yet another memorable Parliamentary service was that held on December 20th, 1648, when Hugh Peters, the fanatical Puritan divine, delivered his famous address from the pulpit in which he denounced Charles as “the Great Babbas, murderer, tyrant, and traitor,” and incited his hearers to bring the King “to condign, speedy, and capital punishment.” When the Restoration came, the practice continued of delivering political sermons to a congregation of legislators. An anecdote related by Dr. Johnson throws an amusing light on these official services. “Burnet and Spratt,” he says, “were old rivals. On some public occasion they both preached before the House of Commons. There prevailed in those days an indecent custom. When the preacher touched any favourite topic in a manner that delighted his audiences, their approbation was expressed by a loud hum, continued in proportion to their zeal or pleasure. When Burnet preached, part of his congregation hummed so loudly and so long that he sat down to enjoy it, and rubbed his face with his handkerchief. When Spratt preached, he likewise was honoured with a like animating hum; but he stretched out his hand to the congregation and cried, ‘Peace, peace, I pray you peace.’” “Burnet’s sermon,” we are told by another writer, “was remarkable for sedition, and Spratt’s for loyalty. Burnet had the thanks of the House. Spratt had no thanks, but a good living from the King, which, he said, was of as much value as the thanks of the Commons.”

From time to time the connection of the House of Commons was formally recognised by the making of grants from the public purse for repairs or structural changes. The earliest recorded vote was of £200 in 1650. An important contribution was made in 1734 towards the extensive repairs which were carried out in the church at that period at a cost of £5,000.

The grant was justified on the ground that St. Margaret’s was “as it were a national church for the use of the House of Commons.” This was no doubt in a sense true, but it is probable that the money would not have been so readily obtained but for the powerful influences which it was possible at the time to invoke. Amongst the members of the vestry of the day were the Dukes of Montagu, Dorset, and Richmond; the Earls of Pembroke, Berkshire, Abingdon, and Halifax; Lord Falmouth, Count Bothmar, Sir Robert Walpole, and Horatio Walpole. The Speaker, Sir Arthur Onslow, was also deeply interested in the church, though not a member of the vestry. In 1758 the attachment of members to their parish church was further and more conspicuously demonstrated by the voting of a sum of £5,000 for the purpose of re-pewing and decorating the building. It was in this year that the singularly beautiful east window was placed in position. To this attractive feature of the church a romantic history attaches.



GILBERT BURNET, BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

Once a favourite preacher in St. Margaret’s Church, Westminster.



*From a photo by W. S. Courthall. Copyright, H. Johnston & Co.*

ARCADE CONNECTING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS WITH THE WESTMINSTER STATION OF THE DISTRICT RAILWAY.



*From a print published in 1796.*

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH AND THE NORTH TRANSEPT OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

The view is interesting as showing St. Margaret's Churchyard in its unenclosed state.

Executed at Gouda, in Holland, it was (says Walcott) "originally intended as a present from the magistrates of Dort to Henry VII.; or, as some say, was ordered by Ferdinand and Isabella on the occasion of Prince Arthur being affianced in 1499 to Princess Catharine of Arragon—their portraits being procured for the purpose. The window was probably finished after his brother's death, to be sent as a gift to King Henry VIII. However this may be, it passed into the hands of the Abbot of Waltham, who kept it in his church until the dissolution, A.D. 1540. Robert Fuller, the last abbot to preserve it, sent it to his private chapel at New Hall, in the parish of Boreham, Essex, which was at one time the seat of the Butlers, Earls of Ormond, and it passed into the hands of Sir Thomas, father of Ann Bullen, Queen of Henry VIII. In Queen Elizabeth's time Thomas Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, resided there, and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, purchased it from his family. General Monk, to whom that nobleman's son sold it, caused the window to be buried underground, well knowing that if it fell into the hands of the Puritans, they would not fail to destroy so fine an effort of genius and talent, as it is said they destroyed during those disgraceful times no less than eight hundred similar productions of art. After the Restoration General Monk replaced it in his chapel at New Hall. After the death of the General, owing to the circumstance of his son Christopher, Duke of Albemarle, dying without children, this beautiful seat became the property of his Duchess, and gradually fell into a state of ruin and decay. Its next owner was John Obinias, Esquire, who demolished the fine chapel, but preserved the window in hopes of selling it to some church. The window lay for some time cased up in chests, until purchased by Mr. Conyers, of Copt Hall, in Essex, near Epping, for fifty guineas, to be placed in his chapel, and paid Mr. Price a large sum for repairing it. Mr. John Conyers, the son of the late owner of the window, sold it to the committee for repairing and beautifying St.



Margaret's Church for four hundred guineas in 1758, the churchwardens having successfully treated with him."

It was an excellent stroke of business, but bigotry saw in the action an attempt to revive Popish practices. A suit was brought against the churchwardens under the cover of an old statute of Edward VI.—"an Act for abolishing and putting away divers books and images"—and it was sought to secure the removal of the window on the ground that the representation of the Crucifixion, which is the subject of the design, was "a superstitious image or picture." After lasting for seven weary years, the suit was decided in favour of the churchwardens, each party being ordered to pay its own costs. Now the only wonder is that even Puritanical fanaticism could find in this exquisite work of art a cause of offence.

On several occasions since 1758 Parliament has voted money for the repair of St. Margaret's. For instance, in 1799 the large grant of £6,721 was made, and three years later a further sum of £4,500 was contributed, the supervision of expenditure being entrusted under the authority of the Statute 48 George III. to the Commissioners for the Improvement of Westminster. Again, in 1813 there was a considerable grant of £3,059 for the repair of the church, and further advances were made in the years 1824 and 1845.

While officially so much has been done to mark the close association of the church with Parliament, private effort has lavishly contributed towards the perpetuation of the connection. In and about the sacred building are to be found numerous beautiful monuments to departed Parliamentary worthies. The porch at the south-east end of the church was erected by Caroline, Viscountess Sherbrooke, in memory of her distinguished husband, Viscount Sherbrooke, better known as Robert Lowe. The inscription in Latin states that "he faithfully discharged the



ENTRANCE TO THE CHAPTER HOUSE, WESTMINSTER.

Through these gates passed many generations of legislators before the Chapter House was abandoned as a place of assembly of the House of Commons.

highest offices of State and always put country before party." One of the stained-glass windows commemorates William Page, Baron Hatherley, the Lord Chancellor. "He was a good man" is the simple epitaph which is inscribed beneath the window. A painted window is also in the church to the memory of Lord Farnborough, better known as Sir Thomas Erskine May, for more than half a century in the service of the House of Commons, holding various important offices, and for fifteen years the Clerk of the House. Sir Thomas Erskine May was the author of several historical and constitutional works, among them the "Constitutional History of England, 1760—1860," continuing Hallam. But the work he will always be identified with is the "Treatise on the Laws, Privileges, Proceedings, and Usages of Parliament." First published in 1844, it has from time to time been revised and published in various editions, and at the present time is the recognised authority describing the various functions and proceedings of Parliament in a form adapted, as well to purposes of reference, as to a methodical treatment of the subject.

Beneath the window at the west end of the south aisle is the inscription to the memory of the unfortunate brother of the present Duke of Devonshire: "Dedicated by his fellow members of the House of Commons to the beloved memory of Frederic Charles Cavendish, son of the seventh Duke of Devonshire, member for the Northern Division of the West Riding of York-

shire for seventeen years, and Chief Secretary for Ireland. Born on the Feast of St. Andrew, 1836, and, like him, permitted in singleness and humility of heart to follow his Lord, and with his blood to seal a life devoted to duty. On the day of his arrival in Dublin, in company with, and in attempted defence of, his colleague, Mr. T. N. Burke, he was murdered in the Phoenix Park, May 6th, 1882."

Yet another Parliamentary memorial which calls for notice is a brass tablet placed beneath the stained-glass window erected to commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887. The tablet is in memory of the Right Hon. Charles Shaw Lefevre, who, after serving the office of Speaker of the House of Commons, was in 1857 raised to the House of Lords with the title of Viscount Eversley. He died December 28th, 1888, at the age of ninety-five.

Though none of the eminent individuals whose virtues and public services are thus perpetuated are buried within the precincts of the church, there is yet in and about it some illustrious dust. In the churchyard were interred in 1491 the remains of William Caxton, the Father of Printing. A little more than



THE CHAPTER HOUSE, WESTMINSTER.

Exterior of the "incomparable structure" in which the House of Commons assembled.



WESTMINSTER ABBEY, THE CHAPTER HOUSE, ETC.  
A bird's-eye view from the top of the Victoria Tower. From this point of vantage is obtained a magnificent view of the ecclesiastical buildings in all their completeness.



THE INTERIOR OF THE CHAPTER HOUSE, WESTMINSTER.  
 Sir Gilbert Scott's design for its proposed restoration which was afterwards adopted.

Westminster occur in the mortuary records of St. Margaret's—indeed, it may be doubted whether any parish church in the country can lay claim to so remarkable a connection. Nowadays, a stretch of velvety turf gives a uniform and pleasing aspect to the churchyard, and it is difficult to realise that the spot was for centuries the chief burial-place in Westminster. But it is a historic fact that the ground about the church has been raised some eight or nine feet above the original level, chiefly owing the vast number of bodies which have been interred within its limits. Before the churchyard was closed, a scandalous condition of affairs existed. It was here that Cowper received the second religious impression which so profoundly influenced his life. On passing the churchyard one evening at dusk as a boy, he saw a glimmering light amongst the tombs, and on going to ascertain the cause was struck by a human skull thrown out of a half-completed grave by a grave-digger, who was working by lantern light at his gruesome task.

In dealing with the precincts of the Palace of Westminster it is impossible to leave out of consideration the Chapter House of the venerable Abbey. Most people who nowadays visit this "incomparable structure," after perhaps an absorbingly interesting morning amongst the mouldering tombs of the greatminster, naturally associate it exclusively with the old monastic

sixty years later in 1552—was placed in the same sacred ground the body of Richard Cecil—or, as the name is given in the ancient records of the church, Richard Cycell the father of Lord Barghley and the ancestor of the Marquis of Salisbury. Within the chancel beneath the high altar, as previously noted, was privately buried on the day of his execution the headless body of Sir Walter Raleigh. Near his grave is that of John Harrington, the author of "Oceana," and the founder of the Rota Club. In the churchyard rest Wenceslaus Hollar, the famous engraver; Henry Elsing, the eminent Clerk of the House of Commons, and the author of the well-known constitutional work, "The Ancient Method and Manner of holding Parliaments in England"; and Cole, a Burgess for Westminster, whose name is perpetuated by a memorial in the church bearing this quaint inscription:—

In Parliament a Burgess Cole was placed,

In Westminster the like for many years;  
 But now with saints above his soul is traced.

And lives a Burgess with heaven's royal  
 peers.

O blessed change from earth where Death is  
 king,

To be united there, where angels sing.

Many other names more or less intimately associated with the life of

life of the spot. But it is really quite as memorable for its Parliamentary as for its ecclesiastical traditions. For here, as we have seen, the House of Commons first found a home of its own, and here fitfully for two hundred years were the sittings of the popular chamber held. In point of antiquity it is not equalled by any building which has ever been devoted to legislative or national consultative purposes in existence. Six hundred and sixty years at least have passed away since the faithful Commons, driven out from association with the Peers in the Palace of Westminster, entered upon a separate existence within its walls. It witnessed the birth of the Constitution and its passage through a precarious childhood to adolescence. It was the cradle of our liberties, and of the privileges which we hold dear. The Englishman who can enter its walls without feeling his pulse beat the quicker as he recalls its history is not worthy of the name.

Built on the site of an older structure about the middle of the thirteenth century, under the direction of Abbot Littlington, who was responsible for some of the finest work of the Abbey, it is a magnificent example of English architecture. Old Matthew Paris, writing of Henry III.'s intention to erect the building, refers to the design as "incomparable," and Sir Gilbert Scott—no mean authority—thoroughly endorses this description, observing that the building "singles itself out among these beautiful works as a structure perfect in itself, of a purely English type as to its plan and outline, and as carrying out the principle of window tracery in fuller and grander degree than any part of the church." In size it resembles the Chapter Houses of Salisbury, Lincoln, and York, the plan being that of an octagon inscribed within a circle sixty feet in diameter. When seen originally in its full glory, with the tracery of its windows undamaged and the statues and internal decorations complete, it must have presented a superb spectacle. Even to-day, when time and vandalistic treatment have left their mark on the work of the ancient craftsmen, it has a nobility which commands attention.

The internal arrangement of the Chapter House is, in its broad features, what it was in

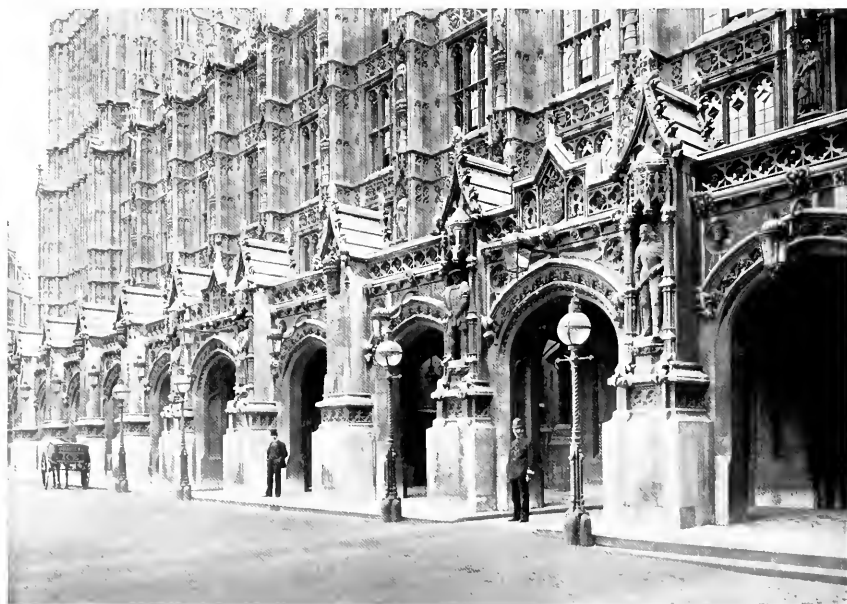


THE CHAPTER HOUSE, WESTMINSTER.

The interior as it is to-day, arranged as a museum of Abbey antiquities.

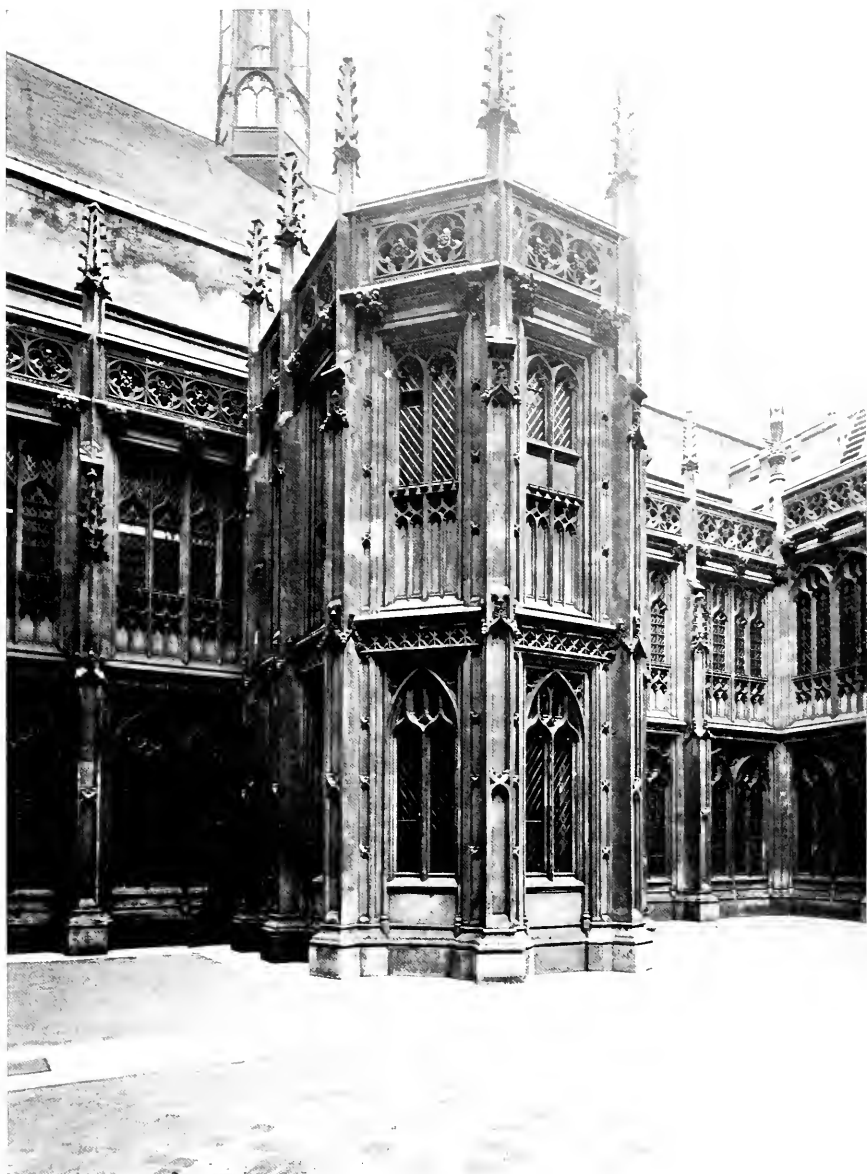
the earliest days of its existence. Two rows of stone benches encircle the chamber, five special stalls being provided for the Abbot, Prior, and three other high officials. The groined roof is supported by a pillar of black Purbeck marble which played a prominent part, it would seem, in the disciplinary system of the Abbey in monastic times. Dean Stanley, in his charming way, gives a vivid account of the uses to which the Chapter House was put in those far remote days. "To this at least once a week," he writes in his "Memorials of Westminster Abbey," "the whole convent came. . . . When they were all seated on the stone steps around, perfect freedom of speech was allowed. Now was the opportunity for making any complaints or for confessing of faults. . . . Here, too, was the scene of judgment and punishment. The details are such as to recall a rough school rather than a grave ecclesiastical community. The younger monks were flogged elsewhere; but the others, stripped wholly or from the waist upwards or in their shirts, girt close around them, were scourged in public here, with rods of single or double thickness, by the mature brothers who formed the council of the Abbot (but always excluding the accuser from the office), the criminal himself sitting on a three-legged bench, probably before the central pillar, which was used as judgment-seat or whipping-post. If flogging was deemed insufficient, the only further punishment was expulsion. The terrors of immurement or torture seem unknown."

Dean Stanley connects the building of the Abbey with the occupation of the Chapter House by the Commons. "As the building of the new St. Peter's at Rome by the indulgences issued to provide for its erection produced the Reformation, so the building of this new St. Peter's at Westminster, by the enormous sums which the King exacted from his subjects to gratify his artistic or his devotional sentiment, produced the House of Commons. And the House of Commons found its first independent home in the incomparable Chapter House of Westminster. Whatever may be the satire of Wren's statement that the Abbot lent it to the



NEW PALACE YARD.

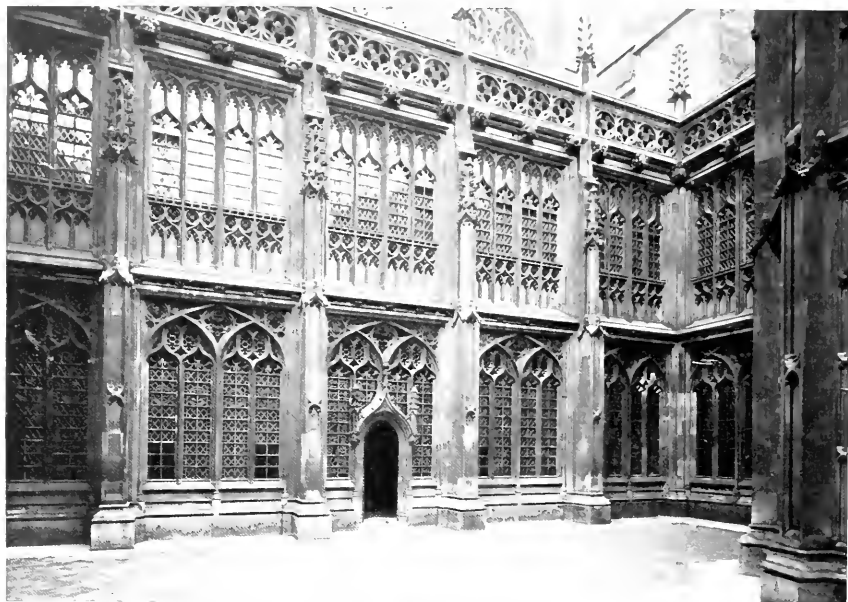
It is at the point on the right of the picture that the majority of members enter and leave the legislative precincts.



*From a photo by W. S. Ousgphell. Copyright, Hutchinson & Co.*

#### THE ORATORY.

The exterior of the beautiful little chapel in which a number of signatures are traditionally believed to have been appended to the death warrant of Charles I.



THE CLOISTER COURT.

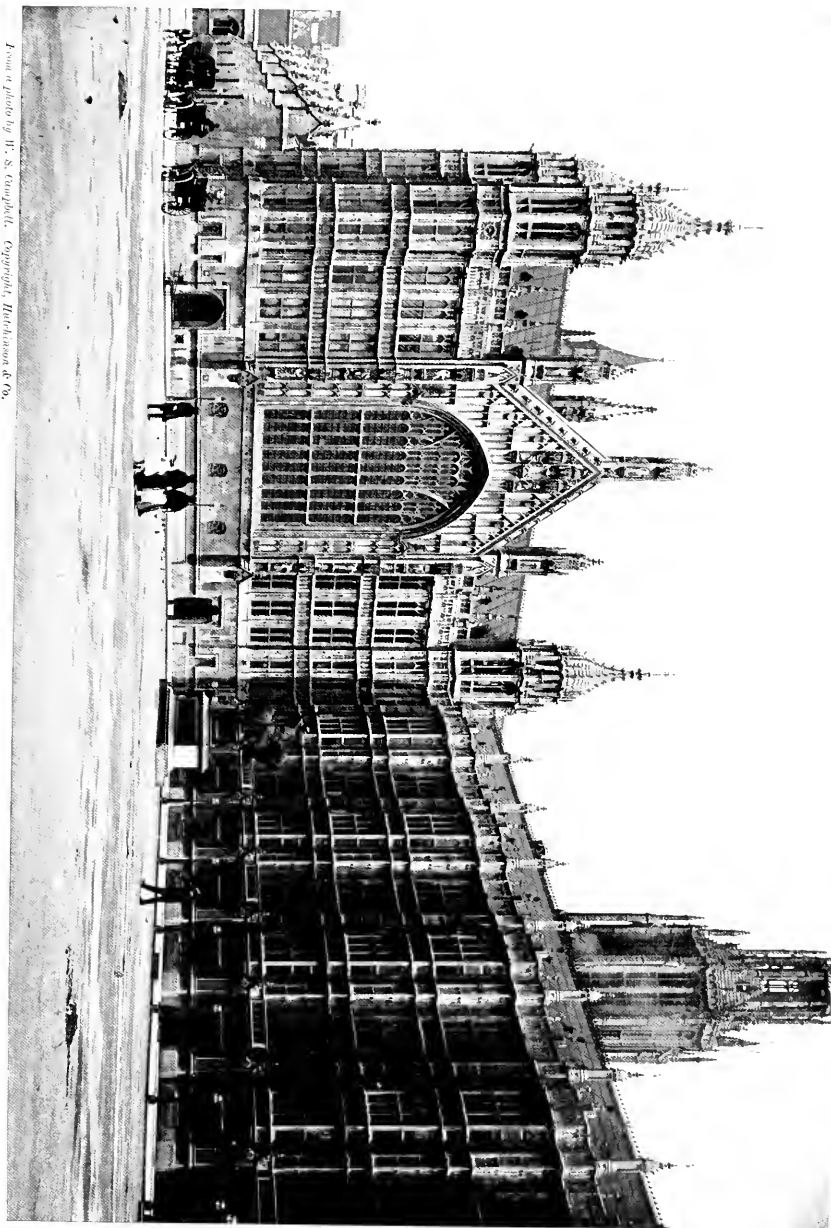
One of the most beautiful features of the design of the Houses of Parliament.

King for the use of the Commons on condition that the Crown should repair it,' there can be no question that from the time of the separation of the Commons from the Lords it became their habitual meeting place. The exact moment of the separation cannot, perhaps, be ascertained. In the first instance the two Houses met in Westminster Hall, but they parted as early as the eleventh year of Edward I. From that time the Lords met in the Painted Chamber in the Palace, the Commons, whenever they sate in London, within the precincts of the Abbey. Such secular assemblies had already assembled under its shadow, though not yet within the Chapter House. . . .

'In the refectory the Commons were convened under Edward II. when they impeached Piers Gaveston, and also on several occasions during the reigns of Richard II., Henry IV., and Henry V. But their usual resort was 'in their ancient place the House of the Chapter of the Great Charter of the Abbey of Westminster.' On one occasion a Parliament was summoned there in 1256, even before the birth of the House of Commons, to grant a subsidy for Sicily. There John Balliol consented in 1292 to withdraw his claims on the Crown of Scotland. The black rood of St. Margaret was brought from the adjacent Treasury, and over this his oath was sworn. It is from the reign of Edward III., however, that these meetings of the Commons were fixed within its walls. With this coincides the date of those curious decorations which in that age seemed specially appropriate. Piers Plowman's vision of a Chapter House was as of 'a great church carven and covered, quaintly entailed, with seemly ceilings set aloft, and, as Parliament House, painted about.' The seraphs that adorn the chief stalls, the long series of apocalyptic pictures which were added to the lesser stalls, were evidently thought the fitting accompaniments of the great Council Chamber. . . .

'The Speaker no doubt took his place in the Abbot's stall facing the entrance. The burgesses must have sate round the building—those who had the best seats in the eighty





*From a photo by W. S. Campbell. Copyright, Hutchinson & Co.*

#### OLD PALACE YARD, WESTMINSTER.

So called because from it was accurately approached the "Old Palace," as distinguished from the "New Palace," which Richard I. proposed to erect to the east, and of which Westminster Hall was to form a part.

stalls of the monks, the others arranged as best they could. To the central pillar were attached placards, libellous or otherwise, to attract the attention of the members. . . .

"The Acts of Parliament which the Chapter House witnessed derive a double significance from the locality. . . . Inquestionably there is a strange irony, if indeed it be not rather a profounder wisdom, in the thought that within this consecrated precinct were passed those memorable statutes which restrained the power of that very body under whose shelter they were discussed. Here the Commons must have assented to the dry humour of the Statute *Circumspecte Agatis*, which, whilst it appears to grant the lesser privilege of the clergy, virtually withholds the larger. Here also were enacted the Statutes of Provisions and of Præmunire, which, as Fuller says, first pared the Pope's nails to the quick and then cut off his fingers. Here finally were enacted the scenes in which, during the first epoch of the Reformation, the House of Commons took so prominent a part by pressing forward those Church of England statutes which laid 'the foundations of the new State,' which 'found England



WESTMINSTER ABBEY, FROM THE JEWEL TOWER.

A view of the minster from an unfamiliar standpoint.

in dependency upon a foreign Power' and 'left it a free nation,' which gave the voice of the nation for the first time its free expression in the councils of the Church. . . .

"Within the Chapter House must have been passed the first Clergy Discipline Act, the first Clergy Residence Act, and, chief of all, the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Submission. Beneath that vaulted roof and before that central pillar must have been placed the famous Black Book which sealed the fate of all the monasteries of England, including the Abbey of Westminster close by, and which struck such a thrill of horror through the House of Commons when they learned its contents. . . .

"The last time that the Commons sat in the building was on the last day of the life of Henry VIII. The last Act passed was the attainder of the Duke of Norfolk; and they must have been sitting here when the news reached them that the King had died that morning and while those preparations for the coronation of Prince Edward—whom King Henry had designed should be crowned before his own death, in order to secure his succession—were going

on in the Abbey, which were summarily broken off when the news came that the King himself was dead."

In the year 1540, when the Abbey was dissolved, the Chapter House became, what it has ever since been, national property. Seven years later, in the first year of Edward VI., the Commons moved to the Chapel of St. Stephen, which, as is related elsewhere, was set apart for their meetings on the dissolution of the College of St. Stephen.

When the Chapter House was rid of its Parliamentary occupants, it entered upon a period of ill-treatment which threatened its unity, if not its very existence. With that contempt for the grand work of the artificers and artists of the so-called Dark Ages which was characteristic of the period which followed the Reformation, the building was turned over to the Government officers for use as a Public Record Chamber. To suit it to this purpose, various defacements and excrescences crept in. About the year 1703 it was actually proposed to Sir Christopher Wren to mutilate it irretrievably by putting up a gallery in the interior; but the great architect very properly declined to sanction any such infamy. In 1740, however, the vaulting having become unsafe, the building, to quote Sir Gilbert Scott, "was made over to some barbarian, who fitted it up for the records with studious disregard to concealment or destruction of its architectural beauties." So it remained for more than a century, until the erection of a new Record Office freed the building of its encumbrances, and in the process directed public attention to the scandalous treatment to which it had been subjected during a long period of years. Sir Gilbert Scott's advice was sought as to the practicability of a restoration. That eminent architect, animated by a zeal as praiseworthy as it was prolific of good results, entered upon an exhaustive investigation of the building, with a view to determining the character of the design in its completeness. With painstaking care he pieced the various parts of the design together until he had the whole before him in all the elegance and beauty of its conception. Then, under the authority of the Government, the restoration was carried through. It was thorough yet conservative. Nothing was added excepting where the old work had been destroyed or hopelessly mutilated, and the only parts conjecturally restored were the external parapet, the pinnacles, the gables of the buttresses, and the roof. So carefully was the work done that, viewing the building to-day, it is difficult to realise that less than a half-century ago its interior was a shapeless mass of woodwork, with every single feature of the ancient building concealed from view, and many parts hopelessly mutilated.



HOISTING THE UNION JACK ON THE VICTORIA TOWER.

A ceremony daily performed. When the Sovereign is within the building, the Royal Standard is flown.

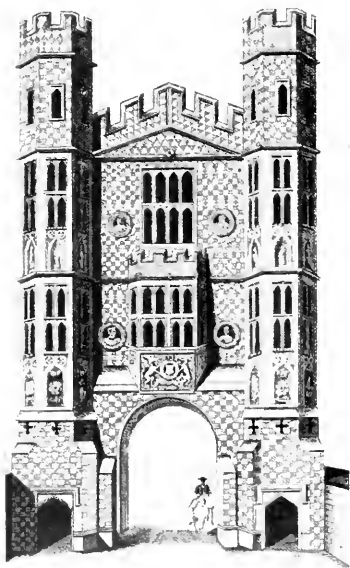
## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE MINISTERIAL ANNEXE OF THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER—WHITEHALL AND DOWNING STREET.

THE official quarter, which lies just outside the limits of the Palace of Westminster, is so intimately associated with the proceedings of Parliament, and touches so many points in its history, that it claims some notice before the final sentence of this work is written. There was probably never a time since the Legislature had a recognised and regular existence when this territory without the gates, as it were, was not markedly a political centre. In King Street, for centuries the only land approach to the Palace from the City and the west, members found at once a common meeting ground and a convenient residential quarter.<sup>1</sup> There also collected the various functionaries of Parliament, and the gossips and professional idlers who

had an interest more or less legitimate in the legislative doings. The establishment of Whitehall as a Royal Palace strengthened the political hold on the district. With the departure of the Sovereign from the ancient Palace the tie which had bound the Government departments and the official element to the legislative precincts was broken, and gradually a drift of officialdom set outwards, absorbing, as generation succeeded generation, one after another of the sites and buildings lying between New Palace Yard and Charing Cross.

One of the first annexations was of a portion of the Palace known then and subsequently as the Cockpit. This was an institution first established by Henry VIII. for the prosecution of the then highly popular form of sport. It was used indifferently for this purpose and as a theatre during several reigns, and figures extensively in this connection in the gossip records of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., according to Malone, frequently ordered plays to be represented there. But it is with Cromwell that the history of the Cockpit as a place of residence and of entertainment rather than of sport is chiefly associated. The great Parliamentarian, when Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, by special resolution of the House on February 29th, 1650, was granted "the use of the lodgings called the Cockpit," and he appears to have resided there until, as Lord Protector, he entered into full possession of Whitehall Palace. Thereafter the building was utilised, in common



*After a great sketch and engraved by G. Vertue, published 1725.*

#### WHITEHALL GATE.

Said to have been designed by Hans Holbein.

<sup>1</sup> "1673: October 29th.—I have come safely to-day to Mrs. Bottom's house in St. Stephen's Alley, King Street. I do not know how I shall like my lodgings. My company is like to be good."—Letter from Sir Edward Harley to his wife: Historical Manuscripts Commission Report.

with other portions of the Palace, for purposes connected with the Cromwellian establishment. On one occasion, at least, the old festive traditions of the place were revived. This was on February 20th, 1657, when the House of Commons, having heard two sermons at St. Margaret's, Westminster, and having enjoyed "a most princely entertainment at Whitehall," were entertained in the Cockpit "with rare music both of voices and instruments till the evening."

Towards the close of the Commonwealth period the Cockpit apartments were assigned by Parliament to General Monk, and he continued in residence after the Restoration, living there all through the terrible plague epidemic of 1666, and subsequently until his death on January 3rd, 1670. Meanwhile, as the diaries of Pepys and Evelyn show, the principal chamber was the scene of the performance of many stage plays, chiefly of the French type, which appealed to Charles II.'s exotic fancy. Some two or three years after Monk's death the premises were transferred to George



*From a print published in 1796.*

## WHITEHALL.

A view from the Banqueting House, looking towards Charing Cross.

Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and later they were purchased by Charles II. for his niece, Princess Anne, on her marriage. The Princess resided in the apartments until the Revolution of 1688 rendered her presence there inconvenient. Her departure was made under somewhat dramatic circumstances. At midnight on November 26th, 1688, news having been received of the landing of the Prince of Orange, she hurriedly put on a travelling cloak, and slipping down the back stairs of the chambers, took her seat in a hackney coach which was awaiting her, and with Lord Dorset and Bishop Compton riding on each side of the vehicle as an escort, was driven to a place previously fixed upon, where she was under the protection of the leaders of the revolutionary movement. When the storm had blown over, she returned to the Cockpit, but only for a time. Owing to serious disagreements between Anne and her sister Mary over the former's devotion to the lady who was afterwards the famous Duchess of Marlborough, the Princess fled to Berkeley House in Piccadilly, where she remained until after Mary's death,

when St. James's Palace was settled upon her by William III. With the expiration of her tenancy the history of the Cockpit entered upon a new chapter.

Up to the reign of Charles I. Treasury business was transacted at the Exchequer Receipt Office in Westminster Cloisters; but when Charles II. put the Treasury into commission in 1660, he gave the department chambers in Whitehall Palace, where it remained until the fire of 1697, which drove it for six weeks to the private house of Mr. William Lowndes, near Westminster Abbey. At the expiration of that time it was transferred to the vacant Cockpit Chambers, which had escaped the fire, and the possession of which had been granted to it by the King. This was the beginning of a long and memorable official career for the old pleasure centre which the eighth Henry had created. Used for the transaction of high State business, it became in course of time the recognised Ministerial headquarters outside the Palace of Westminster, just as Downing Street was in a subsequent generation and remains to this day. Letters were dated from it, and interviews were accorded to personages desiring

audience of Ministers within its precincts. When the negotiations for the Union with Scotland were in progress, it was selected as the most convenient place for the meetings of the Commissioners who were appointed to draw up the terms. Their deliberations were so prolonged that Sir Christopher Wren was directed to enclose a part of the garden to supply them with a recreation ground. The most important purpose to which the Cockpit at this period was devoted, however, was a meeting-place for the Committee of the Privy Council. It was at a sitting of this quasi-judicial body, held to investigate a charge of treason, that the attempt was made on the life of Robert, Earl of Oxford, by Guiscard, the French emigrant. The man was under examination, when, with a quick movement, he seized a penknife and made a lunge with it at Harley, inflicting a slight wound. Before the man could do further mischief, he was struck down by Lord Paulet and Mr. St. John with their swords, which they had drawn immediately the character of the attack was disclosed. The affair created a tremendous stir at the time; but, beyond bringing the Earl of Oxford a much-needed accession of popularity, it had small influence, as it was discovered that Guiscard



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

The American patriot who, as the accredited agent of the popular party, on January 9th, 1774, presented to the Committee of the Privy Council at the Cockpit the petition of the Colony of Massachusetts praying for the removal of the Lieutenant-Governor, who had advocated the employment of military force against the colonists.

was a half-demented individual who had acted on a sudden homicidal impulse without any definite political aim.

Another famous incident in the history of the old Cockpit was the examination before the Privy Council in 1722, for his complicity in the Jacobite plot, of Bishop Atterbury, prior to his commitment to the Tower. This was the last important event which occurred under the old roof-tree, if we except the party gatherings which were held there on the eve of the meeting of Parliament in accordance with a practice established during Walpole's Premiership. In 1733 the building was pulled down to make way for the three-storied structure designed by Kent and Lord Burlington, which was the first of the great blocks of Government offices which now cover nearly the whole of the district herabouts. The old name, however, was not allowed to die out. Numerous letters written in the year 1736-7 by Horace Walpole are to be found in the volumes of the Historical Manuscripts Commission dated from "The Cockpit." Bubb Dodington, in his "Diary," under date February 4th, 1752, speaks of going to the Cockpit "to a prize cause which turned on the authenticity of the Treaty of Commerce with

France"; and he records subsequent visits in connection with "a complaint by Mr. Webb against Mr. William Sharpe for taking exorbitant fees." The Ministerial meetings for the purpose of hearing the Royal speech read on the eve of the meeting of Parliament are stated in the political literature of the time to have been held at the Cockpit. Again, as a further piece of evidence to show that the name was familiarly used long after the old buildings had disappeared, it may be noted that in the Treasury incident bills for 1794 there is an item of £9 for lighting up "the Cockpit room." Even to this day the Treasury Office is officially described as "Chambers," in recognition of the circumstance that the building it supplanted was known as the Cockpit Chambers.

In the face of these facts it is a little remarkable that a lively controversy for some time raged over the question of the precise site of the old Cockpit. Clearly the Treasury Office is the lineal successor of the ancient institution, and occupies the same ground. But the matter does not rest on the evidence of old documents and established tradition alone. Some time since Sir John Taylor, of His Majesty's Office of Works, took the celebrated old ground plan of Whitehall and drew upon it a ground plan of the site as it now exists. On this old plan of 1682, corrected by the present ordnance map, is seen the entrance to the ancient Cockpit, corresponding almost exactly with the present entrance to the Treasury from Whitehall, and leading up to the Cockpit, which stood very near the present Board-Room of the Treasury.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the transformed Cockpit is for the most part that of a Government office in which the ordinary prosaic routine duties of an important branch of the executive are transacted. Still, it is not without its points of popular interest. One incident which stands prominently out in connection with the building is the reception here by a Committee of the Privy Council of Benjamin Franklin on January 9th, 1774. The great American patriot came over with a petition from Massachusetts praying for the removal of the Lieutenant-Governor in consequence of a recommendation he had made in favour of the employment of military force to bring the recalcitrant colonists to submission. We have a picture of him sitting in a recess "like a rock, his head resting on his left hand, and in that attitude abiding the pelting storm" of invective poured out by Wedderburne, the Solicitor-General, which affected the Court spectators to such a degree that "they gave way to transports of laughter and loud acclamations." But "he laughs best who laughs last." Franklin was dismissed with contumely on this occasion; but it was his duty and pleasure not many years later, as United States Ambassador in Paris, to sign the articles of peace establishing the independence of America. On that occasion he donned the self-same suit of Manchester velvet which he wore when before the Privy Council.



*From a photo by W. S. Campbell.*

#### STAIRCASE AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

One of the most notable architectural features of the interior of the noble pile of buildings in which the Foreign Department is housed.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Welby's address at the first annual meeting of the London Topographical Society.



*From a photo by R. K. Durrant & Son, Turquay.*

MR. J. S. SANDAUN,

Private Secretary to Mr. Balfour since 1902.

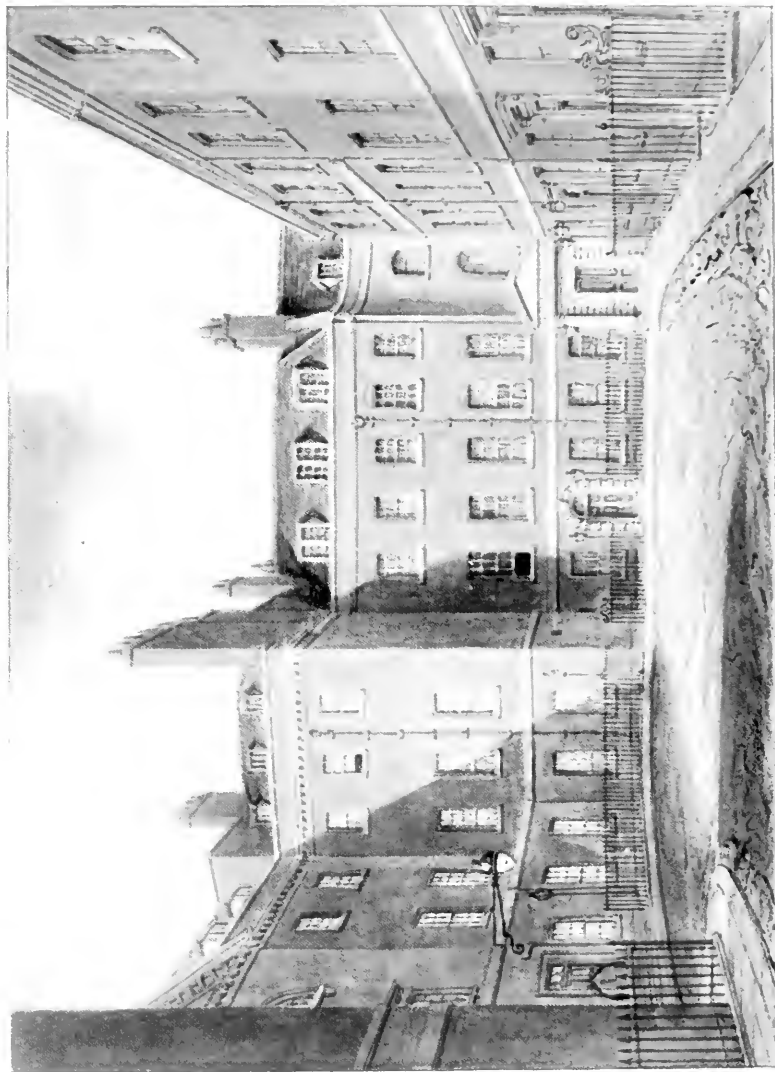
The demolition of the old Cockpit Chambers led indirectly, if not directly, to the birth of another and even more famous Ministerial centre—Downing Street. It may be assumed that the building operations, by depriving Sir Robert Walpole of the suite of rooms he had long used, brought into prominence the desirability of the establishment of a permanent official residence for the First Minister of the Crown. However that may be, at or about the time when work upon the new Treasury offices was commenced, we find George II. offering Walpole, who with the Premiership filled the office of First Lord of the Treasury, the now historic house, No. 10, as a personal gift. The property had for some years previously been occupied by Baron Rothmar, the Hanoverian Minister, who had been given a life tenancy of it by George I., and whose death about this period permitted of this display of generosity on the part of the King to his chief Minister. Walpole was not, as a rule, indisposed to accept favours from his Sovereign without demur; but on this occasion he showed a proper appreciation of what was due to his position rather than to his person by stipulating that the house should be the permanent residence of the First Lord of the Treasury. The King's assent to the condition was given, and so Downing Street became the established Ministerial headquarters—the Mecca of aspiring

politicians, and the Promised Land of experienced statesmanship.

Before the political history of this topographically insignificant little thoroughfare is related, some reference to its earlier career appears to be demanded. Its name was derived from Sir George Downing, a versatile American colonist who—as Mr. Choate, the American Ambassador, reminded a distinguished audience at the Lord Mayor's Banquet on November 9th, 1900—was the first graduate sent out by the Harvard College in 1642. Finding his way to England, Downing became a chaplain in Cromwell's army, and so recommended himself to the good graces of the Protector by his worldly wisdom as much as by his religious zeal, that he was selected by him in 1657 to fill the office of Ambassador at the Hague. "A sinner with all times and changes," as he was described by one writer, he won the good graces of the Rump, and when the political barometer threatened further change, he took care to make his peace with Charles II., so that when the monarch "came into his own," he confirmed the appointment originally made by the Protector. This was a triumph for Downing's diplomacy, but it was not his only achievement in the domain of his private interests. When he returned to England, as he did soon after the commencement of the new reign, he entered Parliament, and so wonned his way into Royal favour by his servile devotion to Court interests that the King heaped substantial favours upon him. One of his rewards, and the most important in the present connection, was the gift of a valuable tract of land at Westminster on the confines of the Palace of Whitehall for building purposes. A condition attached to the grant was that the houses to be built upon the site should be "handsome and graceful." It was not an onerous one as the standard of architectural taste went in those days, and it was probably deemed to have been fulfilled when Downing erected four plain, square, brick mansions with "back fronts" to St. James's Park, and "with a large terras walk next to the Park," to adopt the language of an advertisement when the property was offered for sale in 1722.







*From a water-colour drawing by J. C. Buckle, made in 1827.*

### DOWNING STREET, WESTMINSTER.

The famous thoroughfare as it was before the Government offices on the West side of the street were built.

The "street" thus created by Downing underwent little change for a good many years. Towards the end of the seventeenth century it is described as "a pretty open place, especially at the upper end, where are four or five very large well-built houses fit for persons of honour and quality, each house having a pleasant prospect into St. James's Park, with a terras walk." Gradually, however, other houses were added, until at the end of the eighteenth century it had become, if not a "mean street," a street in which shabby houses predominated, the line of dingy buildings being finished off at the King Street end by a chop-house known by the whimsical title of "The Cat and Bagpipes." Many of the residences were lodging-houses, to which, in the course of years, resorted not a few men who have left their mark on literature. Boswell, the biographer of Johnson, was a patron of one of the establishments, and he records in his well-known work how, but for the rudeness of his landlord, he would have entertained Johnson, Goldsmith, and other of his literary friends at supper one evening in July, 1763. Smollett is another illustrious name associated with the thoroughfare. He made a desperate bid for fortune as a surgeon in a house vacated by the death of a practitioner named James Douglas in 1744. Here died on October 17th, 1776, the Abbé Courayer, author of the "Defence of the Validity of English Ordinations," the talented writer who was described as "the best pen in France, the most amiable and most generally beloved in his Order—*Catholique en gros, Protestant en détail*." Gibbon's name, too, deserves to be remembered when the literary memories of Downing Street are reviewed. He was a frequent visitor there, at the mansion of his patron, Lord Sheffield. But, of course, it is in its political history that this obscure little alley off Whitehall finds its chief title to fame.

The official record of Downing Street opens on Monday, September 22nd, 1735. On that day, according to the newspapers of the time, Sir Robert Walpole transferred himself and his belongings from his house in St. James's Square to the famous No. 10—entering into possession, we may imagine, with a glow of pride at the thought that the First Lord was at last to have an official habitation suited to his rank and convenience. He found the residence altogether to his liking, for he occupied it almost continuously while in London during the remainder of his official life. The place seems even to have suited the fastidious taste of Horace Walpole, who acted as his father's private



From an engraving after the picture by J. P. Knight, A.R.A.

NELSON AND WELLINGTON,

In the waiting-room at the Colonial Office, September, 1805.

secretary. We find him waxing quite enthusiastic over the advantages it offered *à propos* of Sir Robert Walpole's then impending retirement from official life. In a letter addressed to Sir Horace Mann on June 30th, 1742, he says: "I am writing to you in one of the charming rooms towards the Park; it is a lovely evening, and I am willing to enjoy this sweet corner while I may, for we are soon to quit it. Mrs. Sandys came yesterday to give us warning; Lord Wilmington has lent it to them. Sir Robert might have had it for his own at first, but would only take it as First Lord of the Treasury. He goes into a small house of his own in Arlington Street, opposite to where we formerly lived." The Mrs. Sandys referred to by the writer was the wife of Samuel Sandys, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Earl of Wilmington's Administration. Some authorities mention Lord Carteret as the first occupant of No. 10 after Sir Robert Walpole's departure, but the passage quoted seems to indicate that this was not the case. The explanation possibly is that the tenancy of Sandys was a purely temporary and domestic affair, and that Lord Carteret, Secretary of State in the new Administration, first officially occupied the house in succession to Walpole. The latter, at all events, was the leading political personage in the Ministry. This is shown by the well-

known lines of Charles H. Williams, the satirical versifier, on Pulteney's decay of power on his elevation to the House of Lords:—

Few now aspire at your good graces,  
Scarce any sue to you for places,

Since all mankind perceive that power  
Is lodged in other hands.  
Sooner to Carteret now they'll go,  
Or ev'n (though that's excessive low)  
To Wilmington and Sandys.

Even if the residence was for a brief period diverted from the specific uses assigned to it under the deed gift of George II., the arrangement did not influence its historic destiny. Pelham, on becoming Prime Minister in 1743, went into residence in Downing Street, and from that time to the present day, with a few notable exceptions, the house was occupied, as a matter of course, by the head of a Ministry on his accession to power.

The elder Pitt was never greatly attracted by the charm of Downing Street. Though he occupied the official residence for a time, he mainly, when in office, divided his attention between Hayes and his house in Bond Street. At this period Downing Street does not appear to have come into vogue as an



From a photo by Mrs. Stodd, K.C.M.

THE HON. SIR SCHOMBERG McDONNELL,

For many years Private Secretary to the Marquis of Salisbury.

official address. Most of the great statesman's formal communications were superscribed simply "Whitehall." During Lord Bute's Premiership the official residence was put to good service. The Minister lived there in some state, and used the adjacent Cockpit Chambers for his periodical *levées*. Lord North, too, found the atmosphere of Downing Street congenial. But it was during the tenure of office of the younger Pitt that the house, perhaps, attained



LORD SALISBURY'S ROOM AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE.

Now occupied by Lord Lansdowne. The apartment in which his Lordship usually received his diplomatic visitors during his long tenure of the Foreign Secretaryship.

its highest distinction. Unlike his father, Pitt was much drawn to the sedate house with a "back front" to St. James's Park. According to his own statement, during all his long years of power he never slept away from Downing Street unless compelled to do so by the strongest reasons. In his time some momentous interviews must have taken place in the dingy rooms of No. 10. In long procession passed through the official portals the men who made history in the memorable period when Britain, with her back to the wall, was fighting a world in arms. Here came on an eventful night Lord Spencer, the then First Lord of the Admiralty, to give Pitt the first intimation of the mutiny at the Nore, and to receive instructions from him as to the action to be taken in reference to the disturbing out-break. Even less welcome visitors were a howling mob who, inflamed with sensational stories of the excesses of recruiting sergeants engaged in strengthening the military forces to meet the grave crisis in national affairs, tumultuously assembled in Downing Street and demonstrated in a somewhat alarming fashion, until they were dispersed by the peace officers. Their invasion of the official precincts caused a great sensation, but Pitt himself appears to have regarded the incident lightly, judging from a letter he addressed to his mother, Lady Chatham, in response to her anxious inquiries. "I take shame to myself," he said, "for not reflecting how much a mob is magnified by report; but that which visited my window with a single pebble was really so young and so little versed in its business that it hardly merited the notice of a newspaper." Besides these stirring political memories of Pitt's occupation, details have come down to us of a purely personal and domestic interest which throw considerable light upon his household arrangements. Careless of money matters, his affairs during his first Premiership got into a terrible state of confusion. His intimate friend, Robert Smith, whose good offices were enlisted to straighten out matters, found a strange condition of things. A butcher's bill of £96 for one month's supply was one item which confronted the investigator. Other claims were on the same grand scale.



LORD SALISBURY'S ROOM AT THE PRIVY SEAL OFFICE.

It was in this apartment that the late Premier spent the closing days of his official career.

There was waste and ruinous profusion on all hands. In his absorbing devotion to State affairs Pitt quite overlooked the elementary obligations of the head of a household, with the perhaps inevitable result that he was carried to the brink of bankruptcy. It is a tribute to his lavish hospitality that to this day one of the principal chambers at No. 10 is known as "Pitt's dining-room," though a long succession of Premiers followed him in the occupation of the house.

In the nineteenth century Downing Street well maintained the interesting traditions built up in the years which had followed the grant of No. 10 to Walpole. Consequent upon the growth of official business, the Government from time to time purchased property in the street near the First Lord's residence. One of the houses so acquired was No. 12, which is now the official residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Another was No. 14, a building which shortly after its acquisition was rendered famous by being the scene of the only meeting which ever took place between Wellington and Nelson. The episode was described by Wellington in a conversation he had with John Wilson Croker. In this the great soldier is represented as saying: "I only saw Nelson once in my life, and perhaps for an hour. It was soon after I returned from India. I went to the Colonial Office in Downing Street, and there I was shown into a little waiting-room on the right hand, where I found also waiting to see the Secretary a gentleman who, from the likeness to his picture and from the loss of an arm, I recognised as Lord Nelson. He could not know who I was, but entered at once into conversation with me, if I can call it conversation, for it was almost all on his side, and all about himself, and in really a style so vain and so silly as to surprise and almost disgust me." Nelson subsequently left the room, and returning later, having in the interim ascertained who Wellington was, reopened the conversation. His manner, says Wellington, had completely changed. "All that I had thought a charlatan style had vanished, and he talked of the state of this country and of the aspect and probabilities of affairs on the Continent with a good sense and a knowledge of subjects both at home and abroad that surprised me equally and more agreeably than the first part of our interview had done; in fact, he talked like an officer and a statesman."

Another singular reminiscence preserved of the Downing Street of this period relates to an unexpected meeting between two other historical characters. Pichegru and his companions had met in one of the offices to consult a high official under the Duke of Portland. As they entered, a man sitting in a corner darted forward and exclaimed, "You are saved! Then all my misfortunes are forgotten." Startled at the apparently strange conduct of the individual, Pichegru drew back. But he soon afterwards recognised in the emaciated figure which confronted him his chivalrous friend, Tilly, the American sea-captain, by whose aid he and his companions had escaped from the fortress of Surinam.

Changes made in Downing Street by the substitution for the congeries of shabby tenements which during more than a century served for the discharge of the nation's business, of stately blocks of Government buildings, led to the gradual extinction of all interests save those of high officialdom, until No. 10 and Nos. 11 and 12, Downing Street, were left in the position of splendid isolation in which we now see them. Before this stage in the history of the street was reached, the intermingling of officialdom and trade was productive of some curious incidents, according to Sir Edward Hertslet, whose volume of reminiscences was recently published. It seems that the building which served as a Foreign Office overlooked a millinery establishment in which a number of young ladies were employed. The youngest clerks in the department, who were relegated to one of the upper floors, finding time hang somewhat heavily on their hands, amused themselves on bright summer days in manipulating a mirror and flashing the bright rays of the sun upon the faces of the workers in the opposite building. A complaint was lodged by the proprietor with the permanent head of the department, and the matter was brought to the notice of Lord Palmerston, who was then Foreign Minister. Palmerston dealt with the incident in characteristic fashion. Upon the margin of the letter of complaint he wrote: "Who are the unmanly youths who have been casting reflections on young ladies opposite?" The good-humoured endorsement had its effect. From that time forward the industrious milliners



*Taken by W. S. Campbell.*

ROOM AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE WHERE THE CABINET COUNCILS ARE HELD.

Most of the Cabinet Councils of recent years have been held in this apartment.



*From a photo by Augustus Roedelitz.*

NO. 10, DOWNING STREET: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY'S ROOM.

Mr. Gladstone when Premier used this apartment as his workroom.

plied their avocations free from the embarrassing attentions of the idle official apprentices across the way.

No. 10, Downing Street, in the past century has been in almost continuous occupation by the First Lord of the Treasury of the day. The periods during which its tenant was other than the holder of the great office were comparatively brief. Even when—as in the case of the late Mr. W. H. Smith—the residence was not actually occupied as a home, it was utilised for official purposes, and in the eyes of the public at least enjoyed all the prestige which attached to it under more favoured auspices. Perhaps the most devoted of the modern occupants of the house was Lord Beaconsfield. The great statesman, calm and imperturbable as he was in public life, had his sentimental side, and one of his weaknesses—if such it may be called—was an inordinate love for the traditional in all that concerned the high office to which he had climbed. He felt peculiar pride in occupying the same rooms in which had mused and planned and contrived a long succession of the nation's greatest men. Immersed though he was in public affairs at the time he entered into possession, he yet found the opportunity to carry through a most elaborate scheme of decoration at a cost of between two and three thousand pounds. With excellent taste he had the principal rooms renovated in the style of the early Georgian period—a delicate compliment to the Royal donor of the house and its first official occupier which would have warmed even the cold heart of Horace Walpole had he lived to take note of it.

Lord Beaconsfield's great political rival, Mr. Gladstone, though perhaps less sentimentally attached to the old house, was very much at home there. Its situation accorded well with his restless activity both of body and mind. A great worker at all times, he found



it possible here to get through a maximum of business in a minimum period of time. A great walker in all seasons, he liked the convenience which the house afforded for the solitary rambles which he conducted to the end of his official life as an agreeable recreation after the tumult of the Legislative Chamber, or the arduous toil of the bureau. His habit of unrestrained movement was a source of some anxiety in the height of the Land War in Ireland, when assassination and outrage "stalked abroad," not only in Ireland, but in England. Detectives were then posted about Downing Street to protect the aged statesman from attack. The close supervision maintained over his outgoings and his incomings proved highly irksome to the right honourable gentleman, and the story goes that to circumvent his guardians he was in the habit of slipping out by the back door into St. James's Park, leaving his ordinary hat hanging in the hall to give the impression that he was still at home. The device answered for a time, at all events, and no untoward circumstances attended the unaccompanied walks. But it was with a feeling of considerable relief that the police authorities were finally enabled by the improved state of affairs to abandon their duty of watching over their illustrious but wayward charge.

Since this stormy period No. 10 has had its share in the making of history. In the most recent times Cabinet meetings have been held more frequently at the Foreign Office than at the First Lord's residence. But it has, nevertheless, been at intervals the centre of great political activity and excitement. One of the few episodes of a tragic character associated with its official existence occurred on January 12th, 1887. On that day the Earl of Iddesleigh, who, as Sir Stafford Northcote, led the House of Commons with conspicuous ability for many years, called to see the then First Lord of the Treasury. He was waiting in one of the ante-rooms on the first floor when he was seized with illness, and almost immediately



*From a photo by Augusta Kochitz.*

NO. 10, DOWNING STREET: THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

Cabinet Councils were formerly held here. It is now used by Mr. Balfour for performing his official work.

expired. It may be noted in passing that the melancholy incident finds two rather close parallels in political history. It was to a house in Downing Street that the great Earl of Chatham was taken after his fatal seizure in the House of Lords. To his residence in Whitehall Gardens, on the opposite side of Whitehall, Sir Robert Peel was conveyed on June 29th, 1850, after his fatal fall from his horse on Constitution Hill, and there he died on July 2nd following.

Lord Salisbury, almost alone amongst the great Prime Ministers, never set foot in 10, Downing Street, as a tenant. His lordship's family house in Arlington Street, it is to be supposed, was too convenient and comfortable to be relinquished lightly for the official residence, with its glare of publicity, and its manifold disadvantages to one of the studious bent of mind and retiring disposition of the ex-Premier. Lord Salisbury's work and interests centred during the years of his Premiership almost exclusively in the Foreign Office. In the stately precincts of that splendid building he had his official workshop. There he held his weekly diplomatic receptions, and received such callers as had legitimate claims upon his attention. There he dispensed at regular intervals magnificent hospitality to the great world of politics and diplomacy. Late in his career as Premier, when he exchanged the office of Foreign Minister for that of Lord Privy Seal, he found, with his devoted private secretary, the Hon. Sir Schomberg McDonnell, during the remainder of his active public career, an official home in the Privy Seal Office. When the full history of the later nineteenth century comes to be written, it will have much to tell of the important and possibly stirring events which have taken place in the rooms which are identified with his Premiership. Meanwhile, we must rest content with the faithful record which the photographer gives of the rooms as they were during Lord Salisbury's occupation.

Before the official quarter is quitted, something may appropriately be said about the internal arrangements of the historic No. 10, for there are few houses in London to which notable traditions attach which have been so little visited by the ordinary public.

Outwardly the aspect of the house rather repels than invites curiosity, and it must be confessed that closer acquaintance with it does not remove the impression that the place is not quite what might be expected of the official residence of the executive head of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. It is just a plain town house of an old-fashioned type, with appointments which for the most part are distinctly inferior to those of the majority of residences of fairly well-to-do people. What there is of exceptional charm or interest in a decorative sense in the appointments is due to the excellent taste of Mr. Balfour, the Premier, the present occupant, who has surrounded himself, as far as the arrangements of the house allow, with works and objects of art of special attractiveness and value.

On the ground floor are the secretarial apartments—plainly furnished rooms whose appearance eloquently testifies to the practical uses to which they are put. Adjoining them is perhaps the most famous apartment in any private house in the Empire—the Council Chamber, in which



CAPTAIN T. D. BUTLER.

Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod, House of Lords.

successive Cabinets have met since 1856, and in which some of the most momentous Ministerial decisions in English history have been come to. Apart from the double locks, double doors, and double windows with which the room is equipped, there is little in it to suggest its remarkable record. The ceiling, a somewhat lofty one, is supported on classic columns, and the walls are occupied with book-cases and a few pictures of no great merit. The window affords a pleasant outlook on St. James's Park. Immediately below it is a terrace—the "terras" of the advertisement—upon which, during protracted sittings of the Cabinet, Ministers have on



*From a photo by Augustus Kischgitz.*

NO. 10, DOWNING STREET: THE "PITT" DINING-ROOM.

Named after the celebrated statesman. Here the Ministerial full-dress dinners, which precede the opening of Parliament, are held.

occasions aired themselves, to the edification of a curious political crowd down below on the public roadway. At present the apartment serves the purposes of a workroom for Mr. Balfour, and it is furnished simply and plainly, neither better nor worse than the office of any successful business man. A writing-table naturally occupies a prominent place in the room, but it is not much used by the Premier. He prefers to do his writing standing, and his chief work-place is a high desk placed near the window so as to have the full benefit of the light. Looking around this unassuming chamber, the visitor finds it difficult to believe that it is actually what it is—the Holy of Holies of British statesmanship.

A more impressive note is struck when the next floor is reached, and the intruder steps into the principal drawing-room, which is situated immediately above the Council Chamber. It is here that Lord Beaconsfield found the greatest scope for his zeal for renovation. The general scheme of colour is cream and gold. The embellishments are most elaborate and, on the whole, highly effective. On the walls are many portraits of former First Lords of the Treasury, the oldest picture being a work dated 1633 by an unknown artist representing, it is believed, Lord Portland. Amongst the modern works are portraits of Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Rosebery. Next to this handsome room is a smaller apartment used also for reception purposes. A white marble mantelpiece of fine design and a beautiful old mirror complete with a number of pictures from Mr. Balfour's collection for the attention of the

visitor as he passes through on his way to the morning-room. This is the Premier's favourite apartment. It commands a beautiful prospect over St. James's Park, and possibly may have been the self-same room in which Horace Walpole wrote so enthusiastically of No. 10 on that beautiful summer evening in 1712. Another fine apartment is that known as "Pitt's dining-room"—so called because the chamber was built during the great statesman's Premiership. On the walls hang several of Sir Edward Burne-Jones's pictures—including his last work which were brought to Downing Street by Mr. Balfour. Next to the Council Chamber, this room has the greatest associations of any in the house. Here for many years, with occasional interruptions, the Ministerial full-dress dinners which precede the opening of Parliament have been held, and questions of policy confidentially discussed over the reading of the Royal speech to be submitted to the two Houses on the morrow. In times when political feeling ran high, the gatherings must have been full of interest. On all occasions, having regard to the elements brought together and the strictly confidential character of the proceedings, the dinners could not fail to produce incidents of more than passing note. Below this dining-room is "Pitt's kitchen," a chamber conceived on a scale which might be imagined from the magnificence of the statesman's tradesmen's bills. A number of smaller apartments, chiefly devoted to official purposes, and suites of bedrooms complete the establishment.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer's official residence does not present the same points of interest possessed by its neighbours. Nevertheless, it has a history which is worth recounting. Acquired early in the last century for office purposes, it became in time to be regarded as an appanage of the Finance Minister's office. Mr. Gladstone, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, lived in it in 1854, and again for some time previous to 1866. Sir Stafford Northcote (Lord Iddesleigh), when Chancellor, was a tenant from 1874 to 1880. Subsequently for a time two of Mr. Gladstone's private secretaries were permitted to reside in the house. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was an occupant both as Chancellor of the Exchequer and President of the Board of Trade, and Sir William Harcourt was in residence from 1892 to 1895. In recent times the building has been a good deal altered, notably in 1879-80, when a large room for official banquets and deputations was added.

Occupying, as the official residences do, a valuable site in the heart of the official quarter, acting as a slender wedge of drab brickwork in the centre of a block of massive masonry, they will most probably, before many years have elapsed, give place to structures more ornate and better adapted to the purposes to which they are put. But whether they disappear or not, Downing Street is a name which will live in the annals of statesmanship and of diplomacy.

#### CONCLUSION.

Here we must bring our long survey to a close. There are many points connected with the work of Parliament which might still be touched upon and byways of political life which could yet be explored with interest and profit. But, tempting as the inducements are to wander into fresh fields, the limits of space imposed inexorably call a halt. Inadequate, however, as the work necessarily is in many respects, having regard to the immensity of the theme, probably sufficient has been written to induce the general reader to make closer acquaintance with the remarkable history of the Palace of Westminster, and with the moving record of the Mother of Parliaments which has had its home there. If this end is accomplished, the labours of the authors will not have been entirely in vain.



# APPENDIX.

## PARLIAMENTS OF ENGLAND.

15 John . . . . .	1213	10 Edward III. . . . .	1336	20 Richard II. . . . .	1366-7
10 Henry III. . . . .	1226	10 " . . . . .	1336-7	21 " . . . . .	1367-8
38 " . . . . .	1254	11 " . . . . .	1336-7	23 " . . . . .	1369
45 " . . . . .	1261	11 " . . . . .	1337	1 Henry IV. . . . .	1369
49 " . . . . .	1264-5	12 " . . . . .	1337-8	2 " . . . . .	1400-1
3 Edward I. . . . .	1275	12 " . . . . .	1338	3 " . . . . .	1401-2
11 " . . . . .	1282-3	12 and 13 Edward III. . . . .	1338-9	3 " . . . . .	1402
11 " . . . . .	1283	13 Edward III. . . . .	1339	5 " . . . . .	1403
18 " . . . . .	1290	13 " . . . . .	1339-40	6 " . . . . .	1404
22 " . . . . .	1294	14 " . . . . .	1340	7 " . . . . .	1405-6
23 " . . . . .	1295	14 " . . . . .	1340	9 " . . . . .	1407
24 " . . . . .	1296	15 " . . . . .	1341	11 " . . . . .	1409-10
25 " . . . . .	1297	16 " . . . . .	1342	13 " . . . . .	1411
26 " . . . . .	1298	17 " . . . . .	1343	14 " . . . . .	1412-13
28 " . . . . .	1299-1300	18 " . . . . .	1344	1 Henry V. . . . .	1413
28 " . . . . .	1300	20 " . . . . .	1346	2 " . . . . .	1413-14
29 " . . . . .	1300-1	21 " . . . . .	1347-8	2 " . . . . .	1414
30 " . . . . .	1302	22 " . . . . .	1348	3 " . . . . .	1415
33 " . . . . .	1304-5	22 " . . . . .	1348-9	3 " . . . . .	1415-16
34 " . . . . .	1306	25 " . . . . .	1350-1	4 " . . . . .	1416
35 " . . . . .	1306-7	25 " . . . . .	1351-2	5 " . . . . .	1417
1 Edward II. . . . .	1307	26 " . . . . .	1352	7 " . . . . .	1419
1 " . . . . .	1307-8	27 " . . . . .	1353	8 " . . . . .	1420
2 " . . . . .	1309	28 " . . . . .	1354	9 " . . . . .	1421
5 " . . . . .	1311	29 " . . . . .	1355	9 " . . . . .	1421
5 " . . . . .	1311	31 " . . . . .	1357	1 Henry VI. . . . .	1422
5 " . . . . .	1311-12	32 " . . . . .	1357-8	2 " . . . . .	1423
6 " . . . . .	1312	34 " . . . . .	1360	3 " . . . . .	1425
6 " . . . . .	1312-13	34 " . . . . .	1360-1	4 " . . . . .	1425-6
7 " . . . . .	1313	36 " . . . . .	1362	6 " . . . . .	1427
7 " . . . . .	1313	37 " . . . . .	1363	8 " . . . . .	1429
7 " . . . . .	1314	38 " . . . . .	1364-5	9 " . . . . .	1430-1
8 " . . . . .	1314	40 " . . . . .	1366	10 " . . . . .	1432
8 " . . . . .	1314-15	42 " . . . . .	1368	11 " . . . . .	1433
9 " . . . . .	1315-16	43 " . . . . .	1369	11 " . . . . .	1435
9 " . . . . .	1316	45 " . . . . .	1370-1	15 " . . . . .	1436-7
10 " . . . . .	1316	45 " . . . . .	1371	18 " . . . . .	1439
11 " . . . . .	1318	46 " . . . . .	1372	20 " . . . . .	1441-2
12 " . . . . .	1318	47 " . . . . .	1373	23 " . . . . .	1441-5
12 " . . . . .	1319	50 " . . . . .	1375-6	25 " . . . . .	1446-7
14 " . . . . .	1320	51 " . . . . .	1376-7	27 " . . . . .	1448-9
15 " . . . . .	1321	1 Richard II. . . . .	1377	28 " . . . . .	1449
15 " . . . . .	1322	2 " . . . . .	1378	29 " . . . . .	1450
16 " . . . . .	1322	2 " . . . . .	1379	31 " . . . . .	1452-3
17 " . . . . .	1323-4	3 " . . . . .	1379-80	33 " . . . . .	1455
18 " . . . . .	1324	4 " . . . . .	1380	38 " . . . . .	1459
19 " . . . . .	1325	5 " . . . . .	1381	39 " . . . . .	1460
20 " . . . . .	1326-7	5 " . . . . .	1382	1 Edward IV. . . . .	1461
1 Edward III. . . . .	1327	6 " . . . . .	1382	3 " . . . . .	1462-3
2 " . . . . .	1327-8	7 " . . . . .	1382-3	7 " . . . . .	1467
2 " . . . . .	1328	7 " . . . . .	1383	9 " . . . . .	1469
2 " . . . . .	1328	7 " . . . . .	1384	10 " . . . . .	1470
2 and 3 Edward III. . . . .	1328-9	8 " . . . . .	1384	12 " . . . . .	1472
4 Edward III. . . . .	1329-30	9 " . . . . .	1385	17 " . . . . .	1477-8
4 " . . . . .	1330	10 " . . . . .	1386	22 " . . . . .	1482-3
5 " . . . . .	1331	11 " . . . . .	1387-8	1 Richard III. . . . .	1483-4
5 " . . . . .	1331	12 " . . . . .	1388	1 Henry VII. . . . .	1485
6 " . . . . .	1331-2	13 " . . . . .	1389-90	3 " . . . . .	1487
6 " . . . . .	1332	14 " . . . . .	1390	7 " . . . . .	1491
6 " . . . . .	1332	15 " . . . . .	1391	11 " . . . . .	1495
8 " . . . . .	1333-4	16 " . . . . .	1392	12 " . . . . .	1496-7
8 " . . . . .	1334	16 " . . . . .	1392-3	1 Henry VIII. . . . .	1500-10
9 " . . . . .	1335	17 " . . . . .	1393-4	3 " . . . . .	1511-12
10 " . . . . .	1335-6	18 " . . . . .	1394-5	6 " . . . . .	1514-15

### PARLIAMENTS OF ENGLAND—*continued*.

11 Henry VIII. . . . .	1523	30 and 31 Elizabeth . . . . .	1588-9	Interregnum . . . . .	1658-9
21 " . . . . .	1529	35 Elizabeth . . . . .	1592-3	" . . . . .	1659
28 " . . . . .	1536	39 " . . . . .	1597	12 Charles II. . . . .	1660
31 " . . . . .	1539	42 " . . . . .	1601	13 Charles II. (The Long or Pensionary Par- liament) . . . . .	1661
33 " . . . . .	1541-2	1 James I. . . . .	1603-4	31 Charles II. . . . .	1678-9
37 " . . . . .	1545	12 " . . . . .	1614	31 " . . . . .	1679
1 Edward VI. . . . .	1547	18 " . . . . .	1620-1	33 " . . . . .	1680-1
1 " . . . . .	1552-3	21 " . . . . .	1623-4	1 James II. . . . .	1685
1 Mary . . . . .	1553	1 Charles I. . . . .	1625	Convention . . . . .	1688-90
1 " . . . . .	1554	1 " . . . . .	1625-6	2 William and Mary . . . . .	1689-90
1 and 2 Philip and Mary . . . . .	1554	3 " . . . . .	1627-8	7 William III. . . . .	1695
2 and 3 " . . . . .	1555	16 " . . . . .	1640	12 " . . . . .	1700-1
1 and 5 " . . . . .	1557-8	16 Charles I. (Long Par- liament) . . . . .	1640	13 " . . . . .	1701
1 Elizabeth . . . . .	1558-9	Interregnum . . . . .	1653	1 Anne . . . . .	1702
5 " . . . . .	1562-3	" . . . . .	1654		
14 " . . . . .	1572	" . . . . .	1656		
27 " . . . . .	1581				
28 " . . . . .	1586				

### PARLIAMENTS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

4 Anne . . . . .	1705	1 George II. . . . .	1727	8 George III. . . . .	1768
7 " . . . . .	1708	8 " . . . . .	1734	15 " . . . . .	1774
9 " . . . . .	1710	15 " . . . . .	1741	21 " . . . . .	1780
12 " . . . . .	1713	21 " . . . . .	1747	24 " . . . . .	1784
1 George I. . . . .	1714-15	27 " . . . . .	1754	30 " . . . . .	1790
8 " . . . . .	1722	1 George III. . . . .	1761	36 " . . . . .	1796

### PARLIAMENTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

41 George III. . . . .	1801	3 William IV. . . . .	1833	32 Victoria . . . . .	1868
42 " . . . . .	1802	5 " . . . . .	1835	37 " . . . . .	1874
46 " . . . . .	1806	1 Victoria . . . . .	1837	43 " . . . . .	1880
47 " . . . . .	1807	5 " . . . . .	1841	49 " . . . . .	1885
52 " . . . . .	1812	11 " . . . . .	1847	56 " . . . . .	1886
58 " . . . . .	1818	16 " . . . . .	1852	56 " . . . . .	1892
1 George IV. . . . .	1820	20 " . . . . .	1857	59 " . . . . .	1895
7 " . . . . .	1826	22 " . . . . .	1859	64 " . . . . .	1900
1 William IV. . . . .	1830	28 " . . . . .	1865	1 Edward VII. . . . .	1901
1 " . . . . .	1834				

### PARLIAMENTS AND CONVENTIONS OF THE ESTATES OF SCOTLAND.

David II. . . . .	1357-67	54 James VI. . . . .	1621	17 Charles II. . . . .	1665
James I. . . . .	1424-5	54 and 55 James VI . . . . .	1621	18 " . . . . .	1667
James II. . . . .	1439-58	1 Charles I. . . . .	1625	21-26 Charles II. . . . .	1669-74
James III. . . . .	1462-87	4-9 " . . . . .	1628-33	30 " . . . . .	1678
James IV. . . . .	1488-1509	6 " . . . . .	1630	33 " . . . . .	1681
James V. . . . .	1513-40	15-17 Charles I. . . . .	1639-41	1 and 2 James VII. . . . .	1685-6
Mary . . . . .	1512-67	19-20 " . . . . .	1643-4	1 William and Mary . . . . .	1689
James VI. . . . .	1567-1609	20-22 " . . . . .	1644-7	1-5 " . . . . .	
16 James VI. . . . .	1642	23 Charles I.—3 Charles II. . . . .	1648-51	7-13 William . . . . .	1689-1702
50 " . . . . .	1647	12-15 Charles II. . . . .	1661-3	1 Anne . . . . .	
50 " . . . . .	1647			2-6 Anne . . . . .	1703-7

### PARLIAMENTS HELD IN IRELAND.

1559 Jan. 12 . . . . .	to 1559 Feb. 1	1692 Oct. 5 . . . . .	to 1693 June 26	1761 Oct. 22 . . . . .	to 1768 May 28
1568 " 17 . . . . .	" 1571 April 25	1695 August 27 . . . . .	" 1699 " 14	1769 " 17 . . . . .	" 1776 April 5
1585 April 26 . . . . .	" 1586 May 14	1703 Sept. 21 . . . . .	" 1713 May 6	1776 June 18 . . . . .	" 1783 July 25
1613 May 18 . . . . .	" 1615 Oct. 24	1713 Nov. 25 . . . . .	" 1714 August 1	1783 Oct. 14 . . . . .	" 1790 April 8
1634 July 14 . . . . .	" 1635 April 18	1715 " 12 . . . . .	" 1727 June 11	1790 May 29 . . . . .	" 1797 July 11
1639 March 16 . . . . .	" 1648 Jan. 30	1727 " 28 . . . . .	" 1760 Oct. 25	1798 Jan. 9 . . . . .	" 1800 Dec. 31
1664 May 8 . . . . .	" 1666 August 8				

## LORD CHANCELLORS AND KEEPERS OF THE GREAT SEAL.

The following is a list of the Lord High Chancellors and Lord Keepers of the Great Seal of England:—

1067.	Maurice, Bishop of London.	1269.	Richard Middleton.
1068.	Herfast, afterwards Bishop of Elnham.	1272.	John Kirkeby.
1070.	Osbern, Bishop of Exeter.	..	Walter de Merton.
1073.	Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury.	1273.	Robert Burnell.
1078.	Maurice, Bishop of London.	1292.	John Langton.
1083.	William de Beaufeu, Bishop of Thetfort.	1302.	William Greenfield.
1086.	William Gifford.	1304.	William Hamilton.
1090.	Robert Bloet.	1307.	Ralph de Baldoek.
1093.	Waldrie.	..	John Langton.
1094.	William Giffard, Bishop of Winchester.	1310.	Walter Reynolds, Bishop of Winchester.
1101.	Roger, Bishop of Salisbury.	1314.	John Sandall.
1103.	William Giffard.	1318.	John Hotham, Bishop of Ely.
1104.	Waldrie.	1320.	John Salmon, Bishop of Norwich.
1107.	Ranulf.	1323.	Robert de Baldoek.
1124.	Geoffrey Rufus.	1327.	John Hotham.
1135.	Roger of Salisbury.	..	Henry de Clyff.
1139.	Philip.	..	Henry de Burghersh, Bishop of Lincoln.
1142.	Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury.	1330.	John Stratford, Bishop of Winchester.
1154.	Thomas à Becket.	1334.	Richard Bury, Bishop of Durham.
1173.	Ralph de Warneville.	1335.	John Stratford, Archbishop of Canterbury.
1182.	Geoffrey Plantagenet, Archbishop of York.	1337.	Robert Stratford.
1189.	William de Longchamp.	1338.	Richard Bynterworth, Bishop of London.
1197.	Eustace, Bishop of Ely.	1340.	Archbishop Stratford.
1199.	Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury.	..	Robert Stratford, Bishop of Chichester.
1205.	Walter de Grey, Archbishop of York.	..	William Kildesby.
1213.	Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester.	..	Sir Robert Bourchier.
1214.	Walter de Grey.	1341.	Sir Robert Parnyng.
..	Richard de Marisco.	1343.	Robert Sadyngton.
1226.	Ralph Neville.	1345.	John Iford.
1238.	Simon de Cantilupe.	1349.	John Thoresby, Bishop of St. Davids.
1240.	Richard, Abbot of Evesham.	1356.	William Edington, Bishop of Winchester.
1242.	Silvester of Eversden.	1363.	Simon Langham, Bishop of Ely.
1246.	John Mansel.	1367.	William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester.
1250.	William de Kilkenny.	1371.	Sir Robert Thorpe.
1255.	Henry Wingham, Bishop of London.	1372.	Sir Richard Scrope.
1258.	Walter de Merton, Bishop of Rochester.	..	Sir John Knyvett.
1260.	Nicholas of Ely.	1377.	Adam Houghton, Bishop of St. Davids.
1261.	Walter de Merton.	1378.	Sir R. Scrope.
1263.	Nicholas of Ely.	1379.	Simon of Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury.
1265.	Thomas de Cantilupe.	1381.	Richard, Earl Arundel.
..	Walter Gifford.	1382.	Robert Braybrook, Bishop of London.
1266.	Golfrey Gifford.		
1268.	John Clishall.		

1383. Sir Michael de la Pole.
1386. Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury.
1389. William of Wykeham.
1391. Archbishop Arundel.
1396. Edmund Stafford, Bishop of Exeter.
1399. Archbishop Arundel.
- .. John Scarle.
1401. Edmund Stafford.
1403. Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Lincoln.
1405. Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham.
1407. Thomas Arundel.
1410. Thomas Beaufort, Earl of Dorset.
1412. Archbishop Arundel.
1413. Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester.
1417. Bishop Longley.
1422. Simon Ganstede.
1424. Henry Beaufort.
1426. John Kemp, Bishop of London.
1432. John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells.
1450. John Kemp, Archbishop of York.
1454. Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury.
1455. Thomas Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury.
1456. William of Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester.
1460. Thomas Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury.
1463. Robert Kirkham.
1467. Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells.
1473. Lawrence Booth, Bishop of Durham.
1475. Thomas Rotherham, Bishop of Lincoln.
1483. John Russell, Bishop of Lincoln.
1485. Thomas Barowe.
- .. Bishop Aleock.
1487. Archbishop Morton.
1500. Henry Deane.
1504. William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury.
1525. Cardinal Wolsey.
1529. Sir Thomas More.
1532. Sir Thomas Audley.
1544. Thomas, Lord Wriothesley.
1547. William Paulet, Lord St. John.
1551. Thomas Goodrich, Bishop of Ely.
1553. Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester.
1556. Nicholas Heath, Archbishop of York.
1558. Sir Nicholas Bacon.
1579. Sir Thomas Bromley.
1587. Sir Christopher Hatton.
1591. William Cecil, Lord Burghley.
1592. Sir John Puckering.
1596. Sir Thomas Egerton.
1617. Sir Francis Bacon.
1621. John Williams, Archbishop of York.
1625. Sir Thomas Coventry.
1640. Sir John Finch.
1641. Sir Edward Littleton.
1645. Sir Richard Lane.
- 1649-60. Great Seal in Commission.
1660. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon.
1667. Sir Orlando Bridgeman.
1672. Anthony Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury.
1675. Heneage Finch, Lord Nottingham.
1682. Francis North, Lord Guilford.
1685. George, Lord Jeffreys.
- 1689-93. Great Seal in Commission.
1693. John, Lord Somers.
1700. Sir Nathan Wright.
1705. William, Lord Cowper.
1710. Simon, Lord Harcourt.
1714. Lord Cowper.
1718. Thomas Parker, Earl of Macclesfield.
1725. Sir Peter King.
1733. Charles, Lord Talbot.
1737. Philip Yorke, Lord Hardwicke.
1757. Robert, Lord Henley.
1766. Charles, Lord Camden.
1770. Charles Yorke, Lord Morden.
1771. Henry Bathurst, Lord Apsley.
1778. Edward, Lord Thurlow.
1793. Alexander, Lord Loughborough.
1801. John Scott, Lord Eldon.
1806. Thomas, Lord Erskine.
1807. Lord Eldon.
1827. John Singleton Copley, Lord Lyndhurst.
1830. Henry, Lord Brougham.
1834. Lord Lyndhurst.
1836. Charles Pepys, Lord Cottenham.
1841. Lord Lyndhurst.
1846. Lord Cottenham.
1850. Thomas Wilde, Lord Truro.
1852. Edward Sugden, Lord St. Leonards.
- .. Robert Rolfe, Lord Cranworth.
1858. Frederic Thesiger, Lord Chelmsford.
1859. John, Lord Campbell.
1861. Richard Bethell, Lord Westbury.
1865. Lord Cranworth.
1866. Lord Chelmsford.



1868.	Hugh, Lord Cairns.	1885.	Sir Hardinge Giffard, Lord Halsbury.
..	William Page Wood, Lord Hatherley.	1886.	Sir Farrer, Lord Herschell.
1872.	Sir Roundell Palmer, Lord Selborne.	..	Lord Halsbury.
1874.	Earl Cairns.	1892.	Lord Herschell.
1880.	Earl Selborne.	1895.	Lord Halsbury.

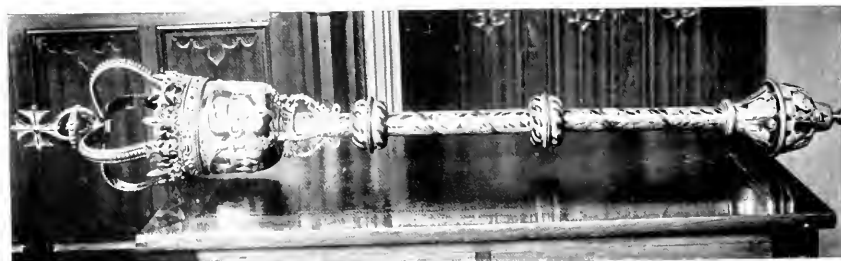
## SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The following is a list of the Speakers of the House of Commons:—

1259.	Peter de Montfort.	1447.	William Tresham.
1332.	Scrope.	1449.	John Say.
1339.	William Trussel.	..	Sir John Popham.
1377.	Sir Peter de la Mare.	..	William Tresham.
..	Sir Thomas Hungerford. <sup>1</sup>	1451.	Sir William Oldhall.
1378.	Sir James Pickering.	1452.	Thomas Thorpe.
1379.	Sir John Goldesburgh.	..	Sir Thomas Charlton.
1381.	Sir Richard de Waldgrave.	1454.	Sir John Wenlock.
1382.	Sir James Pickering.	1459.	Thomas Tresham.
1393.	Sir John Bussey.	1460.	John Green.
1399.	Sir John Cheyne.	1461.	Sir James Strangeways.
1400.	John Doreward.	1467.	John Say.
1401.	Sir Arnold Savage.	1472.	William Alyngton.
1402.	Sir Henry Redford.	1482.	John Wood.
1404.	Sir Arnold Savage.	1484.	William Catesby.
1405.	Sir William Esturmy.	1486.	Thomas Lovell.
1406.	Sir John Tibetot (or Tiptoft).	1487.	John Morkant.
1408.	Thomas Chaucer.	1489.	Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam.
1413.	William Sturton.	1491.	Richard Empson.
..	John Doreward.	1495.	Sir Reginald Bray.
1414.	Wantir (or Walter) Hungerford.	..	Robert Drury.
..	Thomas Chaucer.	1497.	Thomas Inglefield.
1415.	Richard Redman.	1503.	Edmund Dudley.
..	Sir Walter Beauchamp.	1510.	Thomas Inglefield.
1416.	Roger Flower.	1512.	Sir Robert Sheffield.
1420.	Roger Hurst.	1514.	Thomas Nevill.
1421.	Thomas Chaucer.	1523.	Sir Thomas More.
..	Richard Baynard.	1529.	Thomas Audley.
1422.	Roger Flower.	1534.	Sir Humphry Wingfield.
1423.	John Russel.	1536.	Richard Rich.
1425.	Sir Thomas Wanton.	1539.	Sir Nicholas Hare.
..	Sir Richard Vernon.	1542.	Thomas Moyle.
1427.	John Tyrrell.	1547.	Sir John Baker.
1429.	William Alyngton.	1553.	Sir James Dyer.
1431.	John Tyrrell.	..	John Pollard.
1432.	John Russel.	1554.	Robert Brooke.
1433.	Roger Hurst.	..	Clement Heigham.
1435.	John Bowes.	1555.	John Pollard.
1436.	Sir John Tyrrell.	1558.	William Cordell.
1438.	William Burley.	1559.	Sir Thomas Gargrave.
1439.	William Tresham.	1562.	Thomas Wylliams.
1444.	William Burley.	1565.	Richard Onslow.

<sup>1</sup> The first to receive the title of Speaker.

1571.	Christopher Wray.	1680.	William Williams.
1572.	Robert Bell.	1681.	Henry Powle.
1581.	John Poplam.	1685.	Sir John Trevor.
1585.	Sir John Puckering.	1689.	Henry Powle.
1589.	Sergeant Snagg.	1690.	Sir John Trevor.
1592.	Edward Coke.	1695.	Paul Foley.
1596.	Sergeant Yelverton.	1698.	Sir Thomas Littleton.
1601.	Sergeant Crooke.	1701.	Robert Harley.
1603.	Sergeant Phillips.	1705.	John Smith.
1614.	Sir Randolph Crewe.	1708.	Sir R. Onslow.
1620.	Sergeant Richardson.	1710.	William Bromley.
1624.	Sir Thomas Crewe.	1714.	Sir Thomas Hamner.
1626.	Sir Heneage Finch.	1715.	Spencer Compton.
1628.	Sir John Finch.	1728.	Arthur Onslow.
1640.	Sir John Glanville.	1761.	Sir John Cust.
..	William Lenthall.	1770.	Sir Fletcher Norton.
1653.	Francis Rous.	1780.	Charles Wolfran Cornwall.
1654.	William Lenthall.	1789.	Hon. William Wyndham Grenville.
1656.	Sir Thomas Widdrington.	..	Henry Addington.
1658.	Challoner Clute.	1801.	Sir John Mitford.
..	Sir Lilleborne Long.	1802.	Charles Abbot.
1659.	Thomas Bamfield.	1817.	Charles Manners Sutton.
1660.	Sir Harbottle Grimston.	1835.	James Abereromby.
1661.	Sir Edward Turner.	1839.	Charles Shaw Lefevre.
1673.	Sir Job Charlton.	1857.	John Evelyn Denison.
..	Edward Seymour.	1872.	Henry Bouverie Brand.
1678.	Sir Robert Sawyer.	1884.	Arthur W. Peel.
..	Edward Seymour.	1895.	William Court Gully.
1679.	Sergeant Gregory.		



# INDEX

- A Becket, Thomas, 423 (with *ill.*).  
 Abbot, Charles (Lord Colchester), 226,  
 323 (*ill.*), 350, 351, 352, 393,  
 394 (*ill.*).  
 Abbot, last to sit in Parliament, 300.  
 Abercromby, James (Lord Dunfer-  
 line), 324 (*ill.*), 353, 459.  
 Aberdeen, the Earl of, 476, 494, 495.  
 Abingdon, the Earl of, 550.  
 Act of Dissolution, 46.  
 Adam, 415.  
 Addington, Henry (Lord Sidmouth), 58  
 (with *ill.*), 200, 201, 286, 350, 448.  
 Addison, Joseph, 96, 97 (with *ill.*).  
 Address to the Throne, the first, 298.  
 Adomar (Bishop-Elect of Winchester),  
 318.  
 Aired, G. B., 279, 280, 281.  
 Aislachie, 411.  
 Albemarle, the Duke of, 345 (*ill.*), 552.  
 Alexander of Scotland, King, 10, 138.  
 Alexandra, Queen, 344, COLOURED  
 PLATE facing p. 241.  
 Alfred, 9 (*ill.*).  
 Allington, Lord, 187.  
 Almack's, 126, 129 (*ill.*).  
 Althorp, Lord, 218 (with *ill.*).  
 Ancester, the Duchess of, 90.  
 Anglesey, Lord, 90.  
 Anne Boleyn, 186.  
 Anne of Cleves, 186.  
 Anne, Princess, 565.  
 Anne, Queen, 96 (with *ill.*), 99 (*ill.*), 226.  
 Anne (Queen of Richard III.), 184.  
 Annesley, Sir John, 536, 537.  
 Anti-Corn Law League, 480.  
 Apsley, Sir Allen, 81.  
 Arch, Joseph, 507.  
 Argyle, the Duke of, 81.  
 Argyll, the Duke of, 393 (*ill.*).  
 Armada, fulsome speech as to, 23.  
 Armitstead, Mr., 144.  
 Arrest of five members, attempted, 39.  
 Arundel, the Earl of, 152, 176, 306.  
 "Asian Mystery," 498.  
 Asquith, Herbert Henry, 520, 528, 530  
 (with *ill.*).  
 Assassination of Perceval, 82.  
 "Atrocious crime of being a young  
 man," 119.  
 Atterbury, Bishop, 442 (*ill.*), 444, 566.  
 Attire. *See* Dress.  
 Aubrey, 425.  
 Ayloffe, John, 386.  
 Babinaton, Thomas. *See* Macaulay.  
 Bacon, Sir Francis, 424-8, 427 (*ill.*).  
 Bacon, Sir Nicholas, 21 (*ill.*), 300, 302,  
 304, 424.  
 Baillie, Thomas, 449.  
 Bailfour, A. J., 144, 420, 504, 512, 514,  
 515 (*ill.*), 516, 518, 520, 528, 532,  
 576, 577, 578.  
 Balfour, John, 560.  
 Balmerino, Lord, 156.  
 Balmerino, Thomas, COLOURED PLATE  
 facing p. 391, 401, 412, 414, 415  
 (with *ill.*).  
 Banfield, Thomas, 343.  
 Bar of the House, 27 (*ill.*), 244 (*ill.*),  
 380, 395, 393 (*ill.*), 310 (*ill.*), 373  
 (*ill.*), 381 (*ill.*), 389 (*ill.*), 393 (*ill.*),  
 395 (*ill.*): kneeling at the, 387.  
 "Barebones' Parliament, the Praise-  
 God," 48.  
 Barré, Colonel, 119, 120, 121, 122 (*ill.*).  
 Barry, Lady, 170.  
 Barry, Mr. E. M., R.A., 286.  
 Barry, Sir Charles, 135, 169, 170 (with  
*ill.*), 171, 172, 229, 231-7, 250  
 (with *ill.*), 262, 269, 278, 279, 281,  
 284, 286, 296.  
 Barttelot, Sir Walter, 85.  
 "Batavian Graces," 498.  
 Bath, the Earl of. *See* Pulteney, W.  
 "Bats, Parliament of," 60.  
 Beaconsfield, the Earl of, 316, 367  
 (*ill.*), 468, 469, 471, 476, 477 (*ill.*),  
 478, 479 (with *ill.*), 481, 482, 483,  
 484, 486, 487, 489, 490, 492-9, 502,  
 503 (*ill.*), 504, 520, 524, 574, 577.  
 Beauchamp, William de, 176.  
 Bech, the Rev. J., 262.  
 Beke, the Venerable, 1.  
 Bedford, the Duke of, 210.  
 "Begum Speech," the, 124.  
 Belet, Master Michael, 176.  
 Bell, Sir Robert, 335 (*ill.*).  
 Bellamy, John, 69 (*ill.*), 70, 72, 73, 74,  
 75, 80, 265, 266.  
 Bellamy's, Dickens describes, 72.  
 Bellingham, John, 82, 84.  
 Bennet, Thomas, 441.  
 Benson, 384.  
 Bentinck, Lord George, 484 (*ill.*), 486,  
 489.  
 Berkshire, the Earl of, 550.  
 Bernard, Sir R., 120.  
 Bet in the House, 103.  
 Beverley, the Provost of, 297.  
 Bhowagregre, Sir M. M., 507 (*ill.*),  
 508, 510.  
 Bidmead, Reginald, 370.  
 Biddulph, General Sir Michael, 314.  
 "Big Ben," 282, 283, 279-84 (*ills.*).  
 Biggar, 58.  
 Bigod, 297.  
 Bigot, Roger, 128.  
 Bill of Pains and Penalties, 211.  
 Bill of Rights, 56.  
 Bill, Reform, 215, 217 (*ill.*), 218 (*ill.*),  
 219 (*ill.*), 497.  
 Bills, Private, 374.  
 Bills, Public, 374.  
 Bindon, the Viscountess, 300.  
 Blake, Admiral, 487 (*ill.*).  
 Bloody Assize, 424.  
 Blue Boar's Head Inn, 542 (*ill.*), 544.  
 Blunt, Segrave, 150.  
 Bohun, 297.  
 Bolingbroke, Viscount, 95, 96, COLOURED PLATE facing p. 97.  
 Bond, Parlement de la, 60.  
 Bonner, Bishop, 336.  
 Boswell, 369.  
 Bothmar, Baron, 568.  
 Bothmar, Comt, 550.  
 Bourke, Mr., 385.  
 Boyce, 411.  
 Bradlaugh, 84, 510 (*ill.*), 511 (with *ill.*).  
 Bradshaw, 153.  
 Brand, Henry Bonverie (Viscount  
 Hampden), 354, 355, 358 (*ill.*),  
 376, 399 (*ill.*), 501.  
 Brereton, Richard, 147.  
 Bridgeman, Sir Orlando, 429, 432 (*ill.*).  
 Bright, 267.  
 Bright, John, 480, 481 (*ill.*), 494, 497,  
 504.  
 Bristol, the Earl of, 160, 428, 463.  
 Broadhurst, Henry, 506, 507.  
 Brodrick, the Hon. William St. John,  
 528 (*ill.*), 520, 532.  
 Brodrick, Sir Allan, 81.  
 Bromley, Sir Henry, 23.  
 Brougham, Lord, 6 (*ill.*), 93, 96, 128,  
 203 (*ill.*), 204 (*ill.*), 206, 207, 210-  
 12, 214, 218 (with *ill.*), 452 (*ill.*),  
 453, 454, 455, 460.  
 Bruce, Mr., 500.  
 Buckingham, the Duke of, 36, 52 (*ill.*),  
 426, 552, 565.  
 Buckingham, the Earl of, 149 (*ill.*),  
 151, 536.  
 Burdett, Sir Francis, 218, 392 (with  
*ill.*), 393, 394, 395, 476.  
 Burgess, Dr., 550.  
 Burghley, Lord, 23 (*ill.*), COLOURED  
 PLATE facing p. 41, 424.  
 Burgoyne, General, 146.  
 Burgundy, the Duke of, 86.  
 Burke, Edmund, 70, 103 (*ill.*), 104 (*ill.*),  
 113, 120, 121, 122, 123 (with *ill.*),  
 124, 126 (*ill.*), 127, 128, 146, 161,  
 162, 250, 348, 349, 417.  
 Burke, T. N., 554.  
 Burlington, Lord, 566.  
 Burnet, Bishop, 550 (with *ill.*).  
 Burns, John, 506 (*ill.*), 507.  
 Burt, Thomas, 504 (*ill.*), 505.  
 Burton, 221, 222.  
 Bury, Baron, 440.  
 Busby, Dr., 343.  
 Bussey, Sir James, 319, 320.  
 Bute, Lord, 311 (*note*), 570.  
 Butler, Captain T. D., 576 (*ill.*).  
 Butler, Sir Francis, 387.  
 Butler, Sir Thomas, 552.  
 Byron (William), Lord, 158.  
 Cairns, Earl, 455, 457 (*ill.*).  
 Call of the House, 15.

- Camden, Lord, 116, 117 (*ill.*).  
 Campbell, Lord, 225, 455 (with *ill.*), 493 (*ill.*).  
 Campbell Bannerman, Sir Henry, 420, 518, 528, 531 (*ill.*).  
 "Candid Friend," the, 181.  
 Canning, George, *FRONTISPIECE*, 132, 200 (with *ill.*), 201, 202 (with *ill.*), 201, 205 (*ill.*), 206, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212, 214, 452, 482 (with *ill.*), 486, 520.  
 Canterbury, Viscount. *See* Sutton.  
 Canute, 1.  
 Carnarvon, the Earl of, 495 (*ill.*), 197.  
 Canvath, the Earl of, 155.  
 Caroline, Queen, 190, 193, 194 (*ill.*), 206, 211, 212 (with *ill.*), 213 (*ill.*), 215 (*ill.*), 152.  
 Carteret, Lord, 570.  
 Carysfort, Lord, 309.  
 Castlemaine, Lady, 428.  
 Castlereagh, Lord, 202, 204, 206 (with *ill.*).  
 Caterton, Thomas. *See* Katrington.  
 Catesby, Robert, 265 (*ill.*), 206.  
 Catesby, William, 331.  
 Cathcart, Lord, 81.  
 Catholic Emancipation, 206, 463, 510.  
 Cave, Edward, 222 (with *ill.*), 223.  
 Cavendish, Lord, 54, 62.  
 Cavendish, Lord Frederick, 554.  
 Cavendish, Lord John, 70, 146.  
 Caxton, William, 554.  
 Cecil, Richard, 556.  
 Cecil, Sir William, 302.  
 Cecil, Sir William. *See* Burghley, Lord.  
 Central Hall, the, 218 (with *ill.*).  
 Chamberlain, Austen, 521.  
 Chamberlain, Joseph, 104 (*note*), 420, 504, 512, 518, 519 (*ill.*), 520, 521, 522.  
 "Champagne Speech," the, 113.  
 Champion, the King's, 2 (*ill.*), 180, 181, 182 (*ill.*), 187 (*ill.*), 192, 195 (*ill.*).  
 Chancellors, Lord, 10, 298, 316, 324, 361, 362, 422-58, 581-3. *See also*:  
 A Becket, Thomas.  
 Bacon, Sir Francis.  
 Bacon, Sir Nicholas.  
 Bridgeman, Sir Orlando.  
 Brougham, Lord.  
 Burghley, Lord.  
 Cairns, Lord.  
 Camden, Lord.  
 Campbell, Lord.  
 Cheshamford, Lord.  
 Cheshamford, the Earl of.  
 Cottenham, Lord.  
 Coventry, Sir Thomas.  
 Cowper, Lord.  
 Crane, Sir Richard.  
 Cranworth, Lord.  
 De Grey, Walter.  
 Eldon, Lord.  
 Erskine, Lord.  
 Finch, Henrice.  
 Finch, Sir John.  
 Gardiner, Stephen.  
 Goodrich, Thomas.  
 Halsbury, Lord.  
 Harcourt, Lord.  
 Haydon, Lord.  
 Hatherley, Lord.  
 Hatton, Sir Christopher.  
 Heath, Nicholas.  
 Henley, Lord.  
 Herschell, Lord.  
 Jeffreys, Lord.  
 King, Sir Peter.  
 Littleton, Sir Edward.  
 Lyndhurst, Lord.  
 More, Sir Thomas.  
 North, Francis.  
 Parker, Thomas.  
 Puckering, Sir John.  
 Richard, Abbot of Evesham.  
 Roger of Salisbury.  
 St. Leonards, Lord.  
 Selborne, Earl.  
 Shaftesbury, the Earl of.  
 Simon of Sudbury.  
 Somers, Lord.  
 Talbot, Lord.  
 Thorlow, Lord.  
 Truro, Lord.  
 Westbury, Lord.  
 William of Wykeham.  
 Williams, John.  
 Wolsey, Cardinal.  
 Wright, Sir Nathan.  
 Chancery, the Court of, COLOURED PLATE facing p. 137.  
 Chaney, Henry J., 291.  
 Chaplain of the House, the, 403.  
 Chapter House, the, 16, 19 (*ill.*), 553-7 (*ills.*), 558, 560, 562, 563.  
 Charles I., 3 (*ill.*), 31 (*ill.*), 33 (*ill.*), 30-41, 69, 152, 153 (with *ill.*), 154 (*ill.*), 155 (*ill.*), 180 (*ill.*), 251, 263, 287, 288 (*ill.*), 306, 323, 324, 340, 342, 401, 402, 404, 409, 428, 545, 564, 566.  
 Charles II., 32 (*ill.*), 51-6, 67, 181 (*ill.*), 186, 302 (*ill.*), 306, 307, 342, 343, 344, 428, 429, 430, 432, 433, 565, 566, 568.  
 Charles, the Elector Palatine, 39.  
 Charles, Prince, 305.  
 Charlton, Sir Job, 307.  
 Chatnam. *See* Pitt.  
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 12 (*ill.*).  
 Chaucer, Thomas, 330.  
 Chaworth, William, 158.  
 Cheshamford, Lord, 54 (*ill.*), 455.  
 Chester, the Earl of, 174.  
 Child King (Henry VI.) opens Parliament, 301.  
 Cholmondeley, the Marquis of, 311.  
 Church, A. H., 238.  
 Churchill, General, 105.  
 Churchill, Lord Randolph, 252 (*ill.*), 254, 270, 504, 512 (with *ill.*), 513.  
 Chute, Chaloner, 343.  
 City, five members protected in, 41.  
 City freedom presented to Sir Arthur Onslow, 318.  
 City of London, representation, 111; petitions, 371.  
 Civil War, the, 42.  
 "Claudestine Outlawries," 364.  
 Clarendon, the Earl of, 428, 429, 130 (*ill.*), 131 (*ill.*), COLOURED PLATE facing p. 433.  
 Clarke, Mrs., 389 (*ill.*), 390 (*ill.*), 391.  
 Clarke, Sir Edward, 228 (*ill.*), 230.  
 Clayton, Sir R., 129, 341.  
 Clifford, Lord, 130, 432.  
 Clinton, Lord, 300.  
 Clock Tower, the, 270, 271 (*ill.*), 272, 275-81 (with *ills.*).  
 Cloisters, the, 287 (*ill.*), 560 (*ill.*).  
 Closure, 376.  
 Coalition Ministry, the, 491.  
 Cobbett, 506.  
 Cobden, Richard, 180 (with *ill.*), 183, 488.  
 Cobham, Lady, 90.  
 Cochrane, Lord, 391, 418 (with *ill.*).  
 Cockburn, Lord, 471.  
 Cockpit, the, 46, 308, 309, 561, 565, 566, 567.  
 Coke, Sir Edward, 26, 29 (*ill.*), 32, 339 (with *ill.*).  
 Colchester, Lord, 300, 350, 393. *See also* Abbot, Charles.  
 Cole, 556.  
 Commissions, Royal, 419.  
 Committee of Supply described, 393.  
 Committee of Ways and Means described, 398.  
 Committee Rooms, 406 (*ill.*).  
 Committees, COLOURED PLATE facing p. 201, 366, 376, 406-20.  
 Commons, the House of, in sixteenth century, 8, 17-21; in early history, 9-16; in seventeenth century, 25-56; in eighteenth century, *FRONTISPIECE*, 95-132; in nineteenth century, 200-20, 450-534; social aspects of, 67-76; the Lobby, 77-85; ladies at the House, 87-94; destruction of, 164-72; description of, 231-6, 251-9.  
 Illustrations of: 37, 40, 42, 45, 47, 67, 70, 71, 76, 77, 79, 81, 83, 84, 85, 90, 92, 93, 101, 102, 108, 125, 142, 152, 163, 167, 207, 217, 227, 231, 251-63, 272, 287, 300, 365, 367, 370, 384, 505.  
 Commonwealth, the, 45-50.  
 Compton, Bishop, 565.  
 Compton, Spencer, 250 (*note*). *See* Wilmington, Earl of.  
 Convention Parliament, the, 51; the Second, 56.  
 Conway, General, 540.  
 Conyers, John, 552.  
 Cooke, William, 382, 384.  
 Cooper, Anthony Ashley, 429, 430, 432, 433, 434 (with *ill.*).  
 Cooper, Mr., 165.  
 Copley, John Singleton. *See* Lyndhurst, Lord.  
 Copyright Bill, 473.  
 Cornwall, Charles W., 348 (*ill.*), 350.  
 Coronations, 5 (*ill.*), 67, 173-99 (with *ills.*).  
 Cottenham, Lord, 455.  
 Cottenham, Mr., 412.  
 Cottingham, Mrs., 385.  
 Cotton, Sir Robert, 29.  
 Count out described, 370.  
 Courayer, Abbé, 563.  
 Court of Claims, the, 188 (*ill.*).  
 Court of Exchequer, the, 7, 8.  
 Court of Requests, the old, 8.  
 Coventry, Sir John, 52, 53 (*ill.*), 54 (with *ill.*).  
 Coventry, Sir Thomas, 426 (*ill.*), 428.  
 Cowper, 556.  
 Cowper, Earl, 317, 443, 441.  
 Craggs, 111.

- Cranborne, Lord. *See* Salisbury, the Marquis of.
- Crane, Sir Richard, 428.
- Cranworth, Lord, 455.
- Crew, Sir Thomas, 29.
- Criméan war debates, 495.
- "Crisis, the," Addison's pamphlet, 98.
- Cromartie, Lord, 156.
- Cromwell, Oliver, 38, 42, 45, 46 (with *ill.*), 47 (with *ill.*), 48, 49, 50, 64, 153, 263, 288, 342, 344 (*ill.*), 401 (*ill.*), 564, 568.
- Cromwell, Richard, 49, 50, 342, 444.
- Crooke, Sergeant, 32, 320, 322.
- Crosby, Lord Mayor, 119, 225.
- Crowle, Mr., 387.
- Crypt Chapel, the, 7 (*ill.*), 285 (with *ill.*), 286, 287.
- Crypt Chapel used for Speaker's dinners, 58.
- Cust, Sir John, 348.
- Daere, Lord, 152.
- Dagger Speech, Burke's, 121.
- Dance, 415.
- David of Scotland, King, 140.
- Debates, reporting of, 221.
- De Brewes, Mary, 149.
- De Brewes, William, 149, 150.
- D'Ewes, Sir Symonds, 221, 298, 302, 304, 305, 306.
- De Grey (Lord Chief Justice), 349.
- De Grey, Walter, 423.
- De Hexham, Roger, 149.
- De la Mare, Sir Peter, 320.
- De Montfort, Peter, 318.
- De Segrave, Sir John, 150.
- Debt, member imprisoned for, 25.
- Denison, E. B., 280, 281, 284.
- Denison, John Evelyn (Viscount Ossington), 353, 354, 355 (*ill.*), 356 (*ill.*).
- Dent, Mr., 279, 280.
- Deputy Speaker appointed, 326.
- Derby, the Earl of, 178. *See also* Stanley, Lord.
- Derwentwater, the Earl of, 155.
- Devereux, Robert. *See* Essex, Earl of.
- Devonshire, the Duchess of, 544 (with *ill.*).
- Devonshire, the Duke of, 314, 527, 528, 529 (*ill.*).
- Dickens, Charles, 73 (*ill.*), 230.
- Digby, John, 38.
- Digby, Sir Everard, 267, 269.
- Digges, Sir Dudley, 29, 30.
- Dilke, Sir Charles, 500, 501.
- Dining at the House, 67.
- Dining-Room, House of Commons, the, 71 (*ill.*).
- Dining-Room, House of Lords, 72 (*ill.*).
- Dinners, Speaker's, 57; Parliamentary full-dress, 309; whitelait, 316.
- Disestablishment, 499.
- Disraeli, Benjamin. *See* Beaconsfield.
- Division, 85, 94, 379.
- Divisions, great, 105, 217, 487.
- Dodding, George Bulb (Lord Melcombe), 105 (with *ill.*), 566.
- Dormer, 441, 443.
- Dorington, Mr., 167.
- Dorset, the Duke of, 550.
- Dorset, Lord, 565.
- Downing, Sir George, 568.
- Downing Street, 568-78 (with *Coloured Plate*).
- Dream related in the House, 31.
- Dress of members, 58-69.
- Drinking customs, 81.
- Dudley, Edward, 331, 332.
- Dudley, Lord, 130.
- Dudley, Lord Robert, 302, 304.
- Duels, 106, 202.
- Dumcannon, 216.
- Dunfermline, Lord. *See* Abercromby, James.
- Dunning, Mr., 120.
- Dutton, Sir Ralph, 383.
- Dyce, Mr., R.A., 238.
- Dymmock, Henry, 184.
- Dymmock, Rev. John, 181.
- Dymmock, Sir John, 180.
- Earle, Mr., 414.
- Earle, Sir Walter, 39.
- Edgeworth, Miss, 92.
- Edward the Black Prince, 138 (with *ill.*), 141.
- Edward the Confessor, 4, 8, 141, 276, 548.
- Edward I., 7, 10 (with *ill.*), 16, 60, 138, 150, 176, 181, 297, 299 (*ill.*), 319, 381.
- Edward II., 7, 10, 60.
- Edward III., 7, 12, 14, 134, 140 (*ill.*), 141, 178, 288, 298, 318, 320.
- Edward VI., 16, 18, 20 (*ill.*), 177 (*ill.*), 263, 264, 300 (*ill.*), 336, 397, 423.
- Edward VII., 144, 145, *Coloured Plate facing p.* 241, 244, 257, 309 (*ill.*), 314, 315 (*ill.*), 316 (*ill.*), 317 (*ill.*).
- Edwin, Lady Charlotte, 90.
- Eldon, Lord, 208, 210 (*ill.*), 448, 449 (with *ill.*).
- Eleanor, Queen, 174.
- Electoral Palatine, Charles, 39.
- Eliot, Sir John, 30, 32, 34, 35.
- Elizabeth, Queen, 8, 12, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22 (with *ill.*), 23, 24, *Coloured Plate facing p.* 24, 63, 179 (*ill.*), 263, 290, 291, 296, 298, 300, 302, 304, 305, 306, 320, 322, 338, 339, 397, 398, 404, 408, 424, 469 (*ill.*), 564.
- Ellenborough, Lord, 246.
- Ellis, Mr., 204.
- Elsinge, Henry, 556.
- Elwes, John, 65 (with *ill.*), 66.
- Empson and Dudley, 331; Walpole compared with, 101.
- Empson, Sir Richard, 331, 332.
- Erskine, H. D., 252 (*ill.*).
- Erskine, Lord, *FRONTISPIECE*, 139, 212 (with *ill.*), 448, 449, 450 (with *ill.*), 452.
- Essex, the Earl of, 152.
- Eversley, Viscount. *See* Lefevre.
- Excise Bill, famous debates on, 101.
- Exeter, the Countess of, 147.
- Fairfax, Lady, 153.
- Falconer, Sir E., 156.
- Falmouth, Lord, 550.
- Farnborough, Lord, 262 (*ill.*), 264.
- Fawkes, Guido, 152, 262, 265 (*ill.*), 266-9, 538.
- Fazakerly, 446.
- Fearne, 381.
- Ferrers, 382.
- Ferrers, the Earl of, 158, 161 (*ill.*).
- "Finality John," 364.
- Finch, Lord, 98, 428 (with *ill.*).
- Finch, Sir Henage (Lord Nottingham), 323, 432, 434 (with *ill.*).
- Finch, Sir John, 34, 35, 128.
- Fire, destruction of the Houses of Parliament by, 165.
- Fisher, John (Bishop of Rochester), 150 (*ill.*), 151, 152.
- Fitzharris, Ann, 87 (with *ill.*), 88.
- Fitzpatrick, Richard, 146.
- Fitzroy, Colonel, 324, 325.
- Five members, attempted arrest of, 39; return to Westminster, 42.
- Fleet Prison, the, *Coloured Plate facing p.* 201, 411.
- Fleetwood, Sir Miles, 401.
- "Fly in amber," 202.
- Foley, Patrick, 314.
- Foley, Paul, 345.
- Foreign Office, the, 567 (*ill.*), 571 (*ill.*), 573 (with *ill.*), 576.
- Forester, Sir Adam, 329.
- Forster, W. E., 504, 507 (*ill.*).
- Fortescue, Sir John, 365.
- Fowler, Sir Henry II., 524 (*ill.*) 528, 530.
- Fox, Charles James, *FRONTISPIECE*, 70, 80 (*ill.*), 82, 116, 120, *Coloured Plate facing p.* 121, 122, 123, 124, 126, 127 (with *ill.*), 128, 130, 132 (*ill.*), 146, 161, 200, 201, 218, 225, 250, 308, 349, 450, 541, 542.
- Fox, Henry, 108 (*ill.*), 111, 124, 126, 127.
- Francis, Sir Philip, 132.
- Franking system, 374.
- Franklin, Benjamin, 566 (*ill.*), 567.
- Fraser, Simon. *See* Lovat, Lord.
- Fraser, Sir William, 252.
- Free Parliament, Monk declares for a, 50.
- Freedom of speech, right of, affirmed, 26.
- Freeman-Mitford, Sir John, 350.
- Frescoes, Paintings, and Tapestries. *Illustrations:* 9, 40, 41, 42, 47, 50, 115, 151, 238, 240, 245, 246, 251, 293, 332, 407, 408.
- Frevilles, the de, 181.
- Fuller, Robert, 552.
- Gambling customs, 126.
- Gardiner, Stephen (Bishop of Winchester), 423, 424 (*ill.*).
- Gascoigne, General, 82.
- Gascoigne, Sir William, 148, 149.
- Gastoyon, Piers, 428, 560.
- "Gentle Shepherd," 112.
- Gentleman's Magazine*, 222.
- George I., 568.
- George II., 185 (*ill.*), 190, 279, 307, 568.
- George III., 5 (*ill.*), 125, 187 (*ill.*), 192, 304 (*ill.*), 305 (*ill.*), 447, 448.
- George IV., 136, 181, 189 (*ill.*), 190 (*ill.*), 191 (*ill.*), 194, 195, 198, 199, 307 (*ill.*), 449, 510.
- Gibbon, Edward, 132, 569.
- Gibson, J., R.A., 242.
- Giles, Sir Edward, 401.

- Gladstone, Herbert, 238.  
 Gladstone, W. E., 1, 141, 142, 143 (*ill.*), 144, 248 (*with ill.*), 252, 256, 316, 354, 368, 372, 460, 471 (*ill.*), 483, 494, 495, 496 (*with ill.*), 499, 500, 501, 504, 512, 513, 520, 523 (*ill.*), 524, COLOURED PLATE facing p. 527, 527 (*ill.*), 528, 574-8.  
 Glasfuir, Sir Francis, 323, 324, 340.  
 Glasfuir, Sir John, 26, 29 (*ill.*), 329, 340.  
 Gloucester, the Duke of, 86, 87, 331.  
 Gloucester, the Earl of, 176.  
 Godfrey, Mr., 412.  
 Godolphin, Lord, 307.  
 Godehard, the Count of, 306.  
 Goodrich, Thomas (Bishop of Ely), 423.  
 Goodwin, Sir Francis, 365.  
 Gordon, Colonel, 540.  
 Gordon, Dr., 224.  
 Gordon, the Duchess of, 88 (*ill.*), 89.  
 Gordon, Lord George, 539, 540.  
 Gorst, Sir John, 512.  
 Gossett, Sir Ralph A., 510 (*ill.*).  
 Goulburne, Henry, 353, 361 (*note*).  
 Grafton, the Duke of, 349, 446.  
 Graham, Sir James, 465.  
 Graham, Sir John, 459.  
 Grand Committees, 410, 420.  
 Grand Remonstrance, the, 38, 39, 60.  
 Grant, General, 128.  
 Grantly, Baron. *See* Norton.  
 Granville, Earl, 248, 490 (*ill.*).  
 Gratton, 250.  
 Great Seal dropped in the Thames, 436; stolen, 447.  
 Great Seal of the Commonwealth, the, 45 (*ill.*).  
 Gregory, Sergeant, 324.  
 Grenville, Lord, 350, 351 (*ill.*), 352 (*ill.*), 448.  
 Grenville, Richard (Earl Temple), 111 (*ill.*), 112, 113, 200, 201.  
 Greville, Mr., 386.  
 Grey, 161.  
 Grey, Archbishop Walter, 297.  
 Grey, Earl, 211 (*with ill.*), 452, 453, 460, 463 (*ill.*).  
 Grey, Lord, 43.  
 Grey, Sir Edward, 528.  
 Grille, the Ladies, 93 (*ill.*).  
 Grimston, Sir Harbottle, 320 (*ill.*).  
 Grimthorpe, Lord, 280, 281, 284.  
 Grocers' Hall, the, 409.  
 Guilford, Lord. *See* North, Lord.  
 Guilford, Earl of. *See* North, Lord.  
 Guiseard, 566.  
 Gully, Edward, 62 (*ill.*).  
 Gully, Miss, 62 (*ill.*).  
 Gully, Mrs., 61 (*ill.*).  
 Gully, William Court, 61 (*ill.*). COLOURED PLATE facing p. 353, 360, 361 (*note*).  
 Gunpowder Plot, the, 25, 152, 236-9, 261-70 (*ills.*), 309.  
 Gurney, Sir G. Isworthy, 270.  
 Guthrie, William, 223.  
 Hacket, Mr., 401.  
 Hale, Mr., 385.  
 Halwell, Sir William, 264.  
 Halifax, the Earl of, 559.  
 Halifax, Lord, 439.  
 Hall, Sir Benjamin, 281.  
 Halshury, Lord, 242, 458 (*with ill.*).  
 Hamilton, Lady Archibald, 90.  
 Hamilton, William Gerard, 111, 142 (*with ill.*).  
 Hamond, Sir Charles Frederick, 521 (*ill.*).  
 Hampden, John, 31, 36, 39 (*with ill.*), 40 (*ill.*), 60, 250.  
 Hampden, Viscount. *See* Brand, Henry Bouverie.  
 Hammer, Sir John, 54, 62.  
 Hammer, Sir Thomas, 97.  
 Hansard, Luke, 230.  
 Harcourt, Lord, 441 (*ill.*), 443.  
 Harcourt, Sir William Vernon, 141, 429, 504, 522 (*ill.*), 524, 525 (*ill.*), 578.  
 Hardinge, Mr., 264.  
 Hardinge, Nicholas, 103.  
 Hardinge, Sir Henry, 218, 466.  
 Hardwicke, the Earl of, 445 (*with ill.*), 446.  
 Hardy, Catherine, 504.  
 Hare, Sir Nicholas, 335, 336.  
 Harley, 566.  
 Harley, Robert. *See* Oxford, Earl of.  
 Harley, Sir Edward, 307, 402, 564 (*note*).  
 Harrington, James, 542, 556.  
 Harrison, Major-General, 46.  
 Hastings, Warren, 122, 130, 160, 163 (*ill.*), COLOURED PLATE facing p. 393, 420.  
 Hatherley, Baron, 423, 455, 500 (*ill.*), 554.  
 Hats in the House, 59-66, 368 (*ill.*), 459.  
 Hatton, Sir Christopher, 22.  
 Hayman, Sir Peter, 29.  
 Hazell, Walter, 507.  
 Heazler, 39, 40 (*ill.*).  
 "Healing Parliament," the, 329.  
 Heath, Nicholas, 423, 425.  
 Heigham, Clement, 336.  
 Heigham, Sir Ralph, 275.  
 Henry I., 136, 173, 181.  
 Henry II., 6, 131.  
 Henry III., 6, 9, 11 (*ill.*), 131, 136, 137, 138, 139 (*ill.*), 141, 173, 174, 182, 297, 318.  
 Henry IV., 178 (*ill.*), 181, 184, 320, 329.  
 Henry V., 146, 148, 149, 183, 297 (*ill.*), 298.  
 Henry VI., 60, 175 (*ill.*), 298, 301 (*ill.*), 330, 374.  
 Henry VII., 222, 246, 291, 298 (*ill.*), 330, 331, 332, 545, 552.  
 Henry VIII., 8, 12, 14, 62, 151 (*with ill.*), 184, 203 (*ill.*), 308, 320, 332, 333 (*ill.*), 334, 335, 336, 382, 424, 552, 562, 564.  
 Henry (son of Henry II.), 174.  
 Henley, Lord, 46 (*with ill.*).  
 Henley, Sir Robert, 423.  
 Henrietta Maria, Queen, 48 (*ill.*).  
 Herbert, Auberon, 501.  
 Herbert, J. R., R.A., 248.  
 Herbert, Sidney, 450 (*ill.*), 495.  
 Herb-women, 184 (*ill.*), 190, 191 (*ill.*).  
 Hereford, the Duke of, 15 (*ill.*).  
 Hereford, the Earl of, 176.  
 Herries, 216.  
 Herschell, Lord, 455, 458 (*with ill.*).  
 Hervey, Augustus, 122.  
 Hervey, Lord, 90.  
 Hezchrig, Sir William, 150.  
 Hicks Beach, Sir Michael, 420, 524, 526, 527, 578.  
 Hitcham, Sir Robert, 14.  
 Hogarth's portrait of Lord Lovat, 156.  
 Holder, John, 412.  
 Holland, Lady, 124.  
 Holland, Lord. *See* Fox, Henry.  
 Hollar, Wenceslaus, 556.  
 Holmes, 34, 25, 39, 40 (*ill.*).  
 Hood, Admiral Lord, 541.  
 Hood, Lord, 193, 194.  
 Hope, Beresford, 498.  
 Horsley, J. C., A.R.A., 247.  
 Host, the Speaker as, 57.  
 Hotspur, 329.  
 "Hotspur of Debate," the, 504.  
 Houlton, Sir James, 344.  
 Houghton, Lord, 456.  
 House of Commons. *See* Commons.  
 Houses, separation of, 16.  
 Howard, Thomas. *See* Norfolk, the Duke of.  
 Howard, William, 302.  
 Howell, George, 507.  
 Hughes, Mr., 414.  
 Hume, Joseph, 262.  
 Hume, Mr., 169, 170.  
 Hungerford, Sir Thomas, 318.  
 Huntington, Lady, 30.  
 Hyde, Edward (Earl of Clarendon), 428, 429, COLOURED PLATE facing p. 333.  
 Idlesleigh, the Earl of (Sir Stafford Northcote), 248, 516 (*ill.*), 575, 578.  
 "Illegal Bar," the, 70 (*ill.*).  
 Impeachment of Warren Hastings, 160; of Lord Melville, 351; of Lord Bacon, 425; of Lord Clarendon, 428; of Lord Macclesfield, 441.  
 India, representative of, 507.  
 Inglefield, Sir Thomas, 320.  
 Ingoldsby, Colonel, 46.  
 "Instrument, the," 48.  
 Ireland, Dean, 168, 169 (*ill.*).  
 James I., 25 (*with ill.*), 26-9, 263, 266, 305, 306, 339, 365, 400, 409, 424, 564.  
 James II., 32 (*ill.*), 56, 65, 154, 188, 190, 402, 431, 435 (*ill.*), 436, 438 (*ill.*), 440.  
 Jameson Raid, the, 420, 421 (*ill.*).  
 Jebb, Dr., 146.  
 Jeffreys, Lord, 431, 436 (*with ill.*), 437 (*ill.*), 438.  
 Jenkins, David, 382 (*ill.*), 386, 387.  
 Jephson, Sir J., 401.  
 Jersey, Lady, 90.  
 "Jerusalem Chamber," the, 125.  
 Jewel Tower, the, 288-93 (*with ill.*).  
 John, King of France, 138, 140.  
 Johnson, Dr., 221, 223 (*with ill.*), 224.  
 Johnstone, Governor, 121.  
 Jones, Gale, 392.  
 Journalists at the House, 85, 221-30.  
 Journals mutilated by James I., 27.  
 Journals of the House of Commons, 263.  
 Katherine of Arragon, 184.  
 Katherine, Queen, 184.

- Katrington, Thomas, 536, 537.  
 Ken, Bishop, 154.  
 Kenedy, Dr., 375.  
 Kenmure, Viscount, 155.  
 Kent, 566.  
 Kenyon, Roger, 68.  
 Keyes, 269.  
 Kidd, Captain, 439.  
 Kilmarnock, Lord, 156, 158 (*ill.*).  
 Kimberley, the Earl of, 144.  
 King's Champion, 2, 180.  
 King, Sir Peter, 413 (*ill.*), 444, 445.  
 King, Thomas, 14.  
 Kingston, Duchess of, 158, 162 (*ill.*).  
 Kitchen Department, origin of, 66.  
 Kneeling at the Bar, 387.  
 Knolls, Sir Francis, 398.  
 Knolls, Sir William, 322.  
 Knowles, Sir Francis, 304.  
 Knightley, Sir R., 401.  
 Knyvett, Sir Thomas, 268.  
  
 Labouchere, Mr., 292.  
 "Labour" members, 504, 506-8.  
 Ladies at the House, 10, 12, 86-94  
 (with *ills.*), 246, 257.  
 Laiton, Dr., 404.  
 Lake, Bishop, 154.  
 Lake, Mary, 147.  
 Lake, Sir Thomas, 147.  
 Lambert, Major-General, 50.  
 Lancaster, the Duke of, 182, 537.  
 Lane, Mrs., 145.  
 Lansdowne, Lord, 93.  
 Latimer, 20 (*ill.*).  
 Laud, Archbishop, 538, 539 (*ill.*).  
 Lawrence, Dr., 161.  
 Leeds, the Duke of, 81.  
 Lefevre, Charles Shaw (Viscount Eversley), 353, 354 (*ill.*), 361 (*note*), 554.  
 Leicester, the Earl of, 176, 304.  
 Leigh, Thomas, 187.  
 Leinster, the Duke of, 212.  
 Lenthall, William, 38, 39 (with *ill.*), 40, 42, 43, 46, 50, 62, 340 (with *ill.*), 341 (*ill.*).  
 Lesser Hall, the, 8.  
 Library, the, 260-64 (*ills.*).  
 Lilburne, John, 545.  
 Little Parliament, the, 48.  
 Littleton, Edward, 428, 429 (*ill.*).  
 Littleton, Sir Thomas, 324, 345, 346.  
 Littleton, Abbot, 557.  
 Liverpool, the Earl of, 204, 208, 211, 212, 482, 486.  
 Hlewellyn, Prince of Wales, 10, 138.  
 Lloyd, Bishop, 154.  
 Lobby, the, 77-85. *Illustrations*: 76, 77, 79, 81, 83, 84, 85, 259, 374, 377.  
 Locke, 445, 544.  
 Londonderry, the Marquis of, 314.  
*See also* Castlereagh, Lord.  
 Long Parliament, the, 36, 45, 50, 51.  
 Long, Sir Lilleborne, 343.  
 Lord Chancellors. *See* Chancellors.  
 Lord Mayor committed to Tower, 119.  
 Lord Protector, Cromwell installed as, 48.  
 Lords, the House of, early history of, 9-16; in the sixteenth century, 8, 10, 20, 22; in the seventeenth century, 30-45, 49, 51; in the eighteenth century, 95-132; in the nineteenth century, 200-20, 459-534; social aspects, 67-76; the Lobby, 77-85; ladies at, 86, 90, 91 (*ill.*); the press, 228, 229; detailed description of, 337-50.  
*Illustrations*: 31, 35, 72, 107, 117, 118, 152, 166, 167, 207, 213, 219, 237-50, 274, 303, 304, 306, 308-13, 315, 317, 497, 509, 534.  
 Lottery Committee, the, 416, 418.  
*See also p.* 417 (*ill.*).  
 Lovat, Lord, 6 (*ill.*), 156, 158, 159 (*ill.*), 160 (*ill.*), COLOURED PLATE facing p. 161.  
 Lovell, Lord, 331.  
 Lovell, Thomas, 330, 331.  
 Lowe, Robert. *See* Sherbrooke.  
 Lowndes, William, 566.  
 Lucy, H. W., 230 (*ill.*).  
 Luttrell, Colonel, 225.  
 Lyndhurst, Lord, 246, 451 (*ill.*), 452, 453, 462, 463, 466 (with *ill.*).  
 Lyndwoode, Bishop, 286.  
 Lyttelton, George, 1st Baron, 111.  
 Lyttelton, Sir Thomas. *See* Lyttelton.  
  
 Macaulay, Lord, 469, 470 (*ill.*), 471 (with *ill.*), 472, 473, 474, 475, 476.  
 McCarthy, Justin, 236 (*ill.*), 230.  
 Macclesfield, the Earl of. *See* Parker.  
 McDonnell, Sir Schomberg, 570 (*ill.*), 576.  
 Mace, the House of Commons, 4 (*ill.*).  
 Mackphendrix, Captain John, 412.  
 Maclure, D., R.A., 240, 247.  
 Maclure, Sir John, 532 (*ill.*).  
 Magna Charta, Henry III. renewing the, 11 (*ill.*).  
 Mahon, Lord, 473.  
 Maiden speeches: Addison's, 97; Steele's, 97; Lord Finch's, 98; Pitt's (the elder), 109; Colonel Barré's, 119; Sheridan's, 123; Pitt's (the younger), 124; Disraeli's, 476.  
 Majocchi, Theodore, 212.  
 Mallory, 29.  
 Malmesbury, Lord, 130.  
 Malory, Peter, 150.  
 Manners, Lord John, 280.  
 Mansfield, Dr., 161.  
 Mansfield, Lord, 419.  
 Marlborough, Duke of, 156, 513 (*ill.*).  
 Marmion, Philip, 181.  
 Marmion, Roger, 181.  
 Marshall, Mr., 550.  
 Marshalsea Prison-inquiry, 414.  
 Marten, Henry, 257, 288, 387.  
 Marvell, Andrew, 52 (*ill.*).  
 Marvell and payment of members, 14.  
 Mary, Queen, 14, 18, 336, 397, 408, 423.  
 Mary Queen of Scots, 21, 338, 398 (with *ill.*).  
 Mary, Queen (of William III.), 55 (*ill.*), 324.  
 Mass, Parliament attends, 393.  
 Match Tax, 500.  
 Maxbery, Sir Joseph, 350.  
 May, Sir T. Erskine, 262 (*ill.*), 264, 554.  
 Maynooth Grant, 474.  
  
 Mazzini's letters, 481.  
 Melbourne, Lord, 168, 460, 462 (with *ill.*), 463, 464, 467.  
 Melcombe, Lord. *See* Dodington.  
 Melville, Lord, 162, 349 (*ill.*), 351, 352.  
 Members, expulsion of, by Cromwell, 46.  
 Members fined for late attendance, 14.  
 Mildmay, Sir H., 15.  
 Mills, 385.  
 "Ministry of all the Talents," 201.  
 Monk, General, 50 (with *ill.*), 342, 552, 545.  
 Monmouth, the Duke of, 54, 56.  
 Montagu, the Duke of, 550.  
 Montague, Edward, 334.  
 Montague, Viscount, 187.  
 Montague, Lord, 268.  
 Montrose, the Duke of, 70, 492 (*ill.*).  
 More, Sir Thomas, 17 (with *ill.*), 150 (*ill.*), 151, 332, 334, 335, 423.  
 Moreton, Mr., 112.  
 Morley, John, 522 (*ill.*), 524, 526.  
 Morrice, Mr., 23.  
 Morbray, Sir John, 85.  
 Murray, Mr., 387, 388.  
  
 Nairn, Lord, 155.  
 Naoroji, Dadabhai, 508.  
 Nelson, Lord, 569 (*ill.*), 572.  
 "Nether House," 17.  
 Nethebole, Sir Jauncs, 31.  
 Nevill, Henry, 542.  
 Newbolt, 538.  
 Newcastle, the Duke of, 106, 108 (*ill.*), 109 (*ill.*), 111, 116, 118, 121 (*ill.*).  
 New Palace Yard described, 536.  
 New Palace Yard, Edward I. delivers speech in, 298.  
 Nithsdale, 153.  
 Noel, Dean (of St. Paul's), 304.  
 Norfolk, the Duke of, 15 (*ill.*), 21, 142, 144, 151, 152, 300, 302, 314, 562.  
 Norfolk, the Duke of, 138.  
 North Briton, the, 118.  
 North, Francis (Lord Guilford), 434 (with *ill.*).  
 North, Lord, 65, 114, 116, 118, 119 (*ill.*), 120, 127, 146, 218, 349, 570.  
 Northampton, the Marquis of, 302.  
 Northcote, Sir Stafford. *See* Idlesleigh, the Earl of.  
 Northington, the Earl of. *See* Henley, Lord.  
 Northumberland, the Duke of, 146.  
 Northumberland, the Earl of, 329.  
 Norton, D., 401.  
 Norton, Sir Fletcher, 348, 349, 350.  
 Nottingham, the Earl of, 114 (*note*), 386, 434 (*ill.*).  
 Nowell, Dr. [1553], 408, 410 (*ill.*).  
 Nowell, Dr. [1772], 402.  
 Nov, 26.  
 Nuts eaten in the House, 68.  
  
 Oates, Titus, 386 (*ill.*), 387 (*ill.*), 390, 538.  
 Oath, the Parliamentary, 364 (*ill.*), 510, 511.  
 O'Brien, Smith, 418, 419 (with *ill.*).  
 O'Connell, Daniel, 225 (*ill.*), 227, 228, 465, 467, 468 (with *ill.*), 469, 470, 471, 476, 478, 510.  
 Octagonal Hall, the, 248.

- Oglethorpe, General, 110, 112, 416 (*ill.*).  
 Old Palace Yard, 536.  
 "Old Tarrant," 495.  
 Oldhall, William, 330.  
 Old-worth, Mr., 101.  
 Oliver, Alderman, 119, 225.  
 Olmuis, John, 552.  
 Onslow, Sir Arthur, 101 (*ill.*), 125 (*ill.*), 130 (*ill.*), 321 (*ill.*), 324, 325, 316, 327, 318, 353, 410, 550.  
 Onslow, Sir Richard, 336, 338, 316, 317.  
 Opening of Parliament, the, by Edward VII., COLORED PLATE facing p. 211, 315 (*ill.*), 317 (*ill.*); by Henry VI., 301 (*ill.*); by Queen Victoria, 309 (*ill.*), 310 (*ill.*). See also pp. 297-317 and 264-8.  
 Orange girl, the, 78 (*ill.*), 80.  
 Orange, Mary, Princess of, 32 (*ill.*).  
 Oratory, the, 287, 288 (*ill.*), 559 (*ill.*).  
 Order Book mutilated by James I., 27.  
 Orford, the Earl of. See Walpole.  
 Oxeington, Viscount. See Denison.  
 Oxenden, Sir George, 411.  
 Oxenford, the Earl of, 306.  
 Oxford, the Earl of, 35 (with *ill.*), 96, 156, 307, 310 (*note*), 561.  
 Paget, Lord, 187.  
 Painted Chamber, the, 4, 6, 8, 15 (*ill.*), 48, 141 (*ill.*), 188 (*ill.*), 288, 300 (*ill.*), 307, 309 (*ill.*), 560.  
 Paintings. See Frescoes.  
 Pairing, 377.  
 Palace Yard, 1 (*ill.*), 4, 74 (*ill.*), 113 (*ill.*), 147 (*ill.*), 275 (*ill.*), 371 (*ill.*), 535 (with *ill.*), 536 (with *ill.*), 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 544, 547, 558 (*ill.*), 561 (*ill.*).  
 Pakatine, Charles the Elector, 39.  
 Palgrave, Sir F., 168.  
 Palgrave, Sir R. F. D., 250, 263, 547.  
 Palmer, George, 38.  
 Palmerston, Lord, 8 (*ill.*), 204, 208, 210 (with *ill.*), 233, 354, 490, 475 (*ill.*), 489, 490, 494, 495, 496, 520, 573.  
 Paris, Matthew, 557.  
 Parker, Thomas (Earl of Macclesfield), COLORED PLATE facing p. 137, 410 (with *ill.*), 441, 412, 413.  
 Parliament Chamber, the, 6.  
 Parliament, the first, 9; first pictorial representation of, 10; old-time Parliaments, 10-16; wages of members, 12 ff.; fines, etc., for laxity of attendance, 14 ff.; in the sixteenth century, 17-21; in the seventeenth century, 25-56; social aspects, 67-76; the Lobby, 77-85; ladies at the House, 84-91; in the eighteenth century, 95-132; destruction by fire, 164-72; coronation ceremonies, 173-192; in the nineteenth century, 200-20, 459-534; detailed description, 231-92; the House at work, etc., 380-421; Parliaments of England, 579-80.  
*Illustrations:* 13, 16, 22, 27, 96, 161, 171, 233, 235, 316, 359. See also Commons, Lords.  
 Parliamentary reporting, 221.  
 Parliamentary vote to victorious general, an early, 329.  
 Parlour, or month of the House, 318.  
 Parnell, Charles Stewart, 85, 351, 501, 508 (*ill.*).  
 Parry, Dr., 538.  
 Paullet, Lord, 566.  
 Payment of members, 12.  
 Pearson, J. L., A.R.A., 131.  
 Pearson, Joseph, 78, 80, 81.  
 Pearson's "Political Dictionary," 78.  
 Peel (A.W.), Lord, 58, 262, 290, 355, 356, 357 (*ill.*), 358 (with *ill.*), 368, 370.  
 Peel, General, 497.  
 Peel, Sir Robert, 8 (*ill.*), 170, 201, 208, 209 (*ill.*), 214, 216, 218, 353, 495, 452, 460, 464, 465, 472, 473 (with *ill.*), 474, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485 (*ill.*), 486, 487, 488, 520, 576.  
 Peers' Chamber, the, 242 (*ill.*), 244.  
 Peers, House of. See Lords, House of.  
 Pelham, Harry, 43.  
 Pelham, Henry, 102, 104 (*ill.*), 106, 108, 307, 398, 570.  
 Pembroke, the Earl of, 174, 176, 187, 188, 550.  
 Pendarvis, Mrs., 90.  
 Pensionary Parliament, 51.  
 Pepys, Samuel, 144 (*ill.*), 285 (*ill.*), 388, 389, 390, 542, 544.  
 Perceval, Colonel, 467.  
 Perceval, Spencer, 81 (*ill.*), 82, 204, 391 (with *ill.*).  
 Percival, Lord, 414.  
 Percy, Sir Thomas, 180.  
 Percy, Thomas, 265 (*ill.*), 266, 268.  
 Perrers, Alice, 320.  
 Perry, 225.  
 Peter the Great, 146, 147 (*ill.*).  
 Peters, Hugh, 548 (*ill.*), 550.  
 Petition of Right, 32.  
 Petitions, 370, 371.  
 Petty, Sir William, 542.  
 Phillips, Sergeant, 339, 400.  
 Pike, Sir Robert, 29.  
 Pichegru, 573.  
 Pickering, Sir James, 319.  
 Pierrepont, Evelyn, 158.  
 Piggott, Dr., 161.  
 Piggott, Sir Christopher, 25.  
 Pitt, Lady Hester, 124.  
 Pitt, Mrs., 160.  
 Pitt, William (Earl of Chatham), 65, 96, 104, 105, 108, 109, 110 (with *ill.*), 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, 117 (*ill.*), 119, 132, 141, 250, 308, 520, 570, 576.  
 Pitt, William (the younger), FROXIPURGE, 72, 82, 120, 124, 127, 128, 130, 131 (*ill.*), 132 (with *ill.*), 200, 226, 250, 316, 350, 351, 372, 417, 450, 452, 520, 571, 572.  
 Popham, Sir John, 319 (*ill.*), 338, 398.  
 Portland, the Duke of, 146, 201, 202 (with *ill.*).  
 Portland, Lord, 577.  
 Powle, Henry, 324.  
 Poynter, Sir E. J., P.R.A., 248.  
 Punsoll, Samuel, 501 (*ill.*), 502.  
 Pownman, Piers, 560.  
 "Praise-God-Barebones Parliament," the, 48.  
 Prayers, 386, 390-405.  
 Presbyterians mob the Speaker, 340.  
 Press, the, 85, 221-230.  
 Press Gallery, the, 227 (*ill.*), 229 (*ill.*).  
 Preston, Dr., 401.  
 Preston, Sir Robert, 316.  
 Pretman, Sir John, 381, 385.  
 Pride, Colonel, 43, 11 (with *ill.*), 388.  
 "Pride's Purge," 43, 44 (*ill.*).  
 Prim, William J., 270.  
 Prince's Chamber, the, 6, 242, 241 (*ill.*), 247 (*ill.*).  
 Prior of St. John of Jerusalem, the, 10.  
 Privy Councils, 21, 28, 506.  
 Privy Seal Office, the, 572 (*ill.*) 576.  
 Prynn, William, 43, 44, 538 (with *ill.*).  
 Puckering, Sir John, 338, 339, 421.  
 Pulteney, William (Earl of Bath), 100-106.  
 Purcell, 544.  
 Pym, John, 29, 36, 39, 40 (*ill.*), 539, 547 (*ill.*), 550.  
 Queensberry, Duchess of, 87 (*ill.*), 90.  
 Questions, 371, 372.  
 Quorum, a, 370.  
 Raikes, Robert, 222.  
 Raleigh, Sir Walter, 26 (*ill.*), 538, 539, 556.  
 Ratcliffe, 331.  
 Redesdale, Lord, 246, 350.  
 Redford, Sir Henry, 329.  
 Reform Bill division, 217.  
 Reform Bill, the, 217-19 (*ills.*), 497.  
 Refreshments at the House, 67-76.  
 Reid, Dr., 171, 234, 235, 268, 270.  
 Remonstrance, the Grand, 38, 39, 60.  
 Rendel, Lord, 144.  
 Reporters' Gallery first established, 228.  
 Rhenish Wine House, 544.  
 Rhodes, Cecil, 69 (*note*), 429 (with *ill.*), 421 (*ill.*).  
 Rich, Sir Richard, 320, 335.  
 Richard I., 134, 174, 549 (*ill.*).  
 Richard II., 7, 12, 15 (*ill.*), 134, 135, 176 (*ill.*), 178, 180, 181, 246, 288, 319, 526, 537.  
 Richard III., 184, 330 (*ill.*), 331.  
 Richard, Abbot of Evesham, 423.  
 Richard, Earl, 297.  
 Richardson, Samuel, 264.  
 Richmond, the Duchess of, 90.  
 Richmond, the Duke of, 416 (with *ill.*), 146, 550.  
 Ridley, Sir M. White, 360, 361 (*note*).  
 Rigby, 349.  
 Rights, Bill of, 56.  
 Rights, Petition of, 56.  
 Robert the Bruce, 138.  
 Robing-Room, House of Lords, the, 238, 239 (*ills.*).  
 Rockingham, the Marquis of, 81, 128.  
 Roebuck, John Arthur, 486 (*ill.*), 490, 495, 496.  
 Roger of Salisbury, 423.  
 Rogers, Sir Edward, 302.  
 Rolland, the, 80, 350, 448.  
 Rookwood, Ambrose, 267, 269.  
 Rosebery, the Earl of, 144, 308, 528, 530, 532, 533 (*ill.*), 577.  
 Rothschild, Baron Lionel de, 511.  
 Rous, Francis, 343 (*ill.*).  
 Royal Commissions, 419.  
 Royal Gallery, House of Lords, the, 240, COLORED PLATE facing p. 241, 243 (*ill.*).



- Royal Speeches, 297-317, 364-8.  
 Rudyard, Sir B., 400 (*ill.*), 401.  
 "Rupert of Debate," the, 465.  
 Russel, John, 330.  
 Russell, Earl (John Francis), 240.  
 Russell, Lord John (Earl Russell), 218, 220, 248, 459 (with *ill.*), 460 (with *ill.*), 464, 489 (with *ill.*), 490, 492, 494, 496.  
 Russell of Killowen, Lord, 230, 520 (*ill.*).  
 Rutland, the Duke of, 144.  
 Rutland, the Earl of, 306.  
 Sacheverell, Dr., 154, 155, 156 (*ill.*), 347.  
 St. Albans, Viscount. *See* Bacon, Sir Francis.  
 St. Edmund's Chamber, the. *See* Painted Chamber, the.  
 St. John of Bletsoe, Lord, 200.  
 St. John, Henry. *See* Bolingbroke.  
 St. John, Mr., 566.  
 St. Leonards, Lord, 453 (*ill.*), 454.  
 St. Lee, Sir William, 302.  
 St. Margaret's Church, 363 (*ill.*), 396 (with *ill.*), 397 (*ill.*), 401 (*ill.*), 403 (*ill.*), 548, 550, 552 (with *ill.*), 553, 554, 556.  
 St. Paul's Cathedral, two Houses go in procession to, 326, 397.  
 St. Stephen's Chapel, FRONTISPIECE, 1 (*ill.*), 7, 8, 17, 42 (*ill.*), 48, 50, 138 (*ill.*), 140 (*ill.*), 165 (*ill.*), 168 (*ill.*), 248, 250, 255 (*ill.*), 293-6, 327 (*ill.*), 331 (*ill.*), 563.  
 St. Stephen's Hall, 132 (*ill.*), 169 (*ill.*), 249 (*ill.*), 250.  
 Salisbury, the Marquis of, 144, 314, COLOURED PLATE facing p. 377, 449, 494 (*ill.*), 497, 498, 499, 514, 517 (*ill.*), 520 (*ill.*), 532.  
 Salomons, Alderman, 511.  
 Saneroff, Bishop, 154.  
 Sandwich, Lord, 446, 449.  
 Sanders, J. S., 568 (*ill.*).  
 Sandys, 103, 104.  
 Sandys, Mrs., 570.  
 Sandys, Samuel, 570.  
 Sandys, Sir Edwin, 26.  
 Sanderson, Lady Francis, 90.  
 Sanderson, Sir William, 90.  
 Sawbridge, 120, 146.  
 Scenes in the House, 19 (*ill.*), 21, 22, 23, 30, 34, 35 (with *ill.*), 36, 37 (*ill.*), 28, 39, 40 (with *ill.*), 44, 46, 47 (*ill.*), 49 (*ill.*), 54, 120, 206, 351, 356, 501.  
 Schomberg, 392.  
 Schell, Mr., 48, 403.  
 Seacroft, Jean, 147.  
 Scott, Mrs., 90.  
 Scott, Sir Gilbert, 288, 557, 563.  
 Seal of the Commonwealth, the, 45.  
 Selborne, the Earl of, 455, 457 (*ill.*).  
 Selden, John, 29, 30 (*ill.*), 34, 35, 350 (*ill.*).  
 Select Committees, 410.  
 Senate of Lilliput, 223.  
 Sermons preached before the Commons, 401, 550.  
 Seymour, Sir Edward, 88, 324, 343, 344, 347 (*ill.*).  
 Shaftesbury, the Earl of, 429, 430, 432, 433 (with *ill.*), 434.  
 Sharpe, Dr., 402.  
 Sharpe, William, 567.  
 Sheffield, Lord, 569.  
 Sheppard, Jack, 443.  
 Sheil, Richard Lalor, 466, 467.  
 Sherbrooke, Viscount, 498 (*ill.*), 500, 501, 553.  
 Sheridan, Mrs., 89.  
 Sheridan, R. B., FRONTISPIECE, 82, 120, 123, 124 (with *ill.*), 161, 200, 201 (*ill.*), 204.  
 Sherrington, Gilbert, 147.  
 Ship Money, 35, 36.  
 Shirley, Sir Thomas, 382.  
 Shrewsbury, the Duke of, 439.  
 Sibthorpe, Colonel, 467.  
 Siddons, Mrs., 450.  
 Sidmouth, Lord. *See* Addington.  
 Silney, the Hon. Henry, 188.  
 Simon of Sudbury, 178, 323.  
 Sinclair, Captain, 412.  
 "Single-Speech Hamilton," 111.  
 Skippon, Sergeant-Major, 538.  
 Smith, the Rev. Sydney, 204 (*ill.*).  
 Smith, Robert, 571.  
 Smith, W. H., 254, 516 (with *ill.*), 574.  
 Smoking-Room, the, 80.  
 Smollett, 569.  
 Snuff-taking, 66.  
 Soane, Sir John, 135, 148 (with *ill.*), 415.  
 "Soapy Sam," 457.  
 Solomon's Porch, 128.  
 Somers, Lord, 428, 439 (with *ill.*), 440.  
 Somerset, the Protector, 152.  
 South African Committee, the, 420, 421 (*ill.*).  
 South Sea Bubble, the, 410, 411, 413 (*ill.*), 441.  
 Southampton, Lord, 324, 325.  
 Speaker, a corrupt, 56, 344.  
 Speaker asleep, 328.  
 Speaker, election of described, 361.  
 Speaker executed, a, 330.  
 Speaker fined for late attendance, 15.  
 Speaker first to be ennobled, 350.  
 Speaker gives a casting vote, 351.  
 Speaker, joke practised on a, 343.  
 Speaker, violent speech by a, 349.  
 Speaker's Chair, the, 256.  
 Speaker's deputy appointed, 326.  
 Speaker's Dinners, origin of, 57.  
 Speaker's duties, 326.  
 Speaker's election not ratified, 524.  
 Speaker's eye, catching the, 378.  
 Speaker's prayers, 398.  
 Speaker's salary, 325.  
 Speakers, 10, 15, 54, 57-66, 82, 83 (*ill.*), 106, 119, 144, 204, 316, 318-60, 361, 407, 409, 583, 584. *See also:*  
 Abercromby, James.  
 Abbot, Charles.  
 Addington, Henry.  
 Bamfield, Thomas.  
 Bell, Sir Robert.  
 Brand, Henry Bouverie.  
 Bussey, Sir John.  
 Catesby, William.  
 Charlton, Sir Job.  
 Chancery, Thomas.  
 Clute, Challoner.  
 Coke, Edward.  
 Compton, Spencer.  
 Cornwall, Charles Wolfran.  
 Crooke, Sergeant.  
 Cust, Sir John.  
 De la Mare, Sir Peter.  
 De Montfort, Peter.  
 Denison, John Evelyn.  
 Dudley, Edmund.  
 Empson, Richard.  
 Finch, Sir Heneage.  
 Finch, Sir John.  
 Foley, Paul.  
 Glanville, Sir John.  
 Gregory, Sergeant.  
 Grenville, Hon. W. W.  
 Grimston, Sir Harbottle.  
 Gully, William Court.  
 Hare, Sir Nicholas.  
 Harley, Robert.  
 Heigham, Clement.  
 Hungerford, W.  
 Ingfield, Thomas.  
 Lefevre, Charles Shaw.  
 Lenthall, William.  
 Littleton, Sir Thomas.  
 Long, Sir Lilleborne.  
 Lovell, Thomas.  
 Miford, Sir John.  
 More, Sir Thomas.  
 Norton, Sir Fletcher.  
 Oldhall, Sir William.  
 Onslow, Arthur.  
 Onslow, Richard.  
 Peel, Arthur W.  
 Phillips, Sergeant.  
 Pickering, Sir James.  
 Popham, John.  
 Powle, Henry.  
 Puckering, Sir John.  
 Redford, Sir Henry.  
 Rich, Richard.  
 Rous, Francis.  
 Russel, John.  
 Seymour, Edward.  
 Sutton, Charles Manners.  
 Thorpe, Thomas.  
 Tiptoft, Sir John.  
 Tresham, William.  
 Trevor, Sir John.  
 Wray, Christopher.  
 Yelverton, Sergeant.  
 Speakership, divisions relating to, 324, 353, 360.  
 Speech from the Throne. *See* Royal Speeches.  
 Spencer, Lord, 571.  
 Spencer, Lord Charles, 309.  
 Spiller, Benjamin, 261.  
 Spratt, 550.  
 Stafford, the Earl of, 178, 538.  
 Stafford, Edward. *See* Buckingham, the Earl of.  
 Stanhope, the Earl of, 411 (with *ill.*).  
 Stanhope, General, 98.  
 Stanley, Lord (the Earl of Derby), 455, 460, 465 (with *ill.*), 466, 467, 490, 492, 493, 496, 497, 499.  
 Star Chamber, the, 8, 21, 34 (*ill.*), 36, 409, 544, 545 (with *ill.*), 547.  
 Steele, Sir Richard, 96, 97, 98 (with *ill.*).  
 Stephen, G. 7, 174.  
 Stephenson, Mr., 280.  
 "Stiff Dick," 346.  
 Stokes, Mistress, 86, 87.  
 Stone, Sir Benjamin, 142, 526 (*ill.*).

- Stratford, the Earl of, 35 (*ill.*), 36  
(with *ill.*), 152 (with *ill.*), 153, 163.  
Strange, Lord, 218.  
Stroud, 35, 39, 40 (*ill.*).  
"Sturdy Beggars," 102.  
Suffolk, the Duke of, 152, 330.  
Suffolk, the Earl of, 208.  
Sugden, Sir Edward, *See* St. Leonards.  
Sunderland, the Earl of, 111, 114 (*ill.*).  
Supply, Committee of, 395, 376.  
Sussex, the Earl of, 552.  
Sute, Mr., 101.  
Sutton, Sir Charles Manners (Viscount Canterbury), 326 (*ill.*), 352, 353 (with *ill.*).  
Swarton, Sarah, 117.  
  
Talbot, Lord, 111 (*ill.*), 115.  
Talbot, Sir Gilbert, 187.  
Talfourd, Sir T. N., 172 (*ill.*), 473.  
Tapestries. *See* Frescos.  
Tapestry Speech, Chatham's, 111.  
Tash, Brian, 23.  
Taylor, Mr., 225.  
Taylor, Sir John, 567.  
Temple Church, the, 409: motion for last at, 22.  
Temple, Earl. *See* Grenville, Richard.  
Temple, Lord, 146.  
Terrace, the, 94.  
Theed, William, 244.  
Thomas, Lord, 329.  
Thompson, Alderman, 216.  
Thornby Island, 2.  
Thorne, Thomas, 230.  
Throne, the Royal, House of Lords, 313 (*ill.*).  
Thurlow, Lord, 162, 446, 447, 448 (with *ill.*).  
Tierney, 208.  
Tilly, Captain, 573.  
Tilt-Yard, the, 537.  
Tiptoft, Sir John, 320.  
"Tory," 56.  
Toby, M.P., 230.  
Townshend, Charles, 113, 111 (with *ill.*), 120, 122.  
Townshend, Thomas, 402 (with *ill.*).  
Traske, 545.  
Treatothick, 120.  
Trelawney, Bishop, 154.  
Tresham, Sir Francis, 267.  
Tresham, William, 330.  
Trevor, Sir John, 56 (with *ill.*), 314, 345, 346.  
Trials, 6, 49, 153, 118-62, 212, 240, 242, 352. *Illustrations:* 3, 6, 152, 153, 157, 159, 160, 163, 213.  
Trout, George, 220 (*ill.*).  
Truro, Lord, 455.  
Turk's Head Inn, the, 542.  
Turner, Bishop, 154.  
Turner, Charles, 116.  
Twiss, 216.  
Tyrrahytt, Sir Thomas, 211.  
  
Ushborne, William, 292.  
  
Vat, the Irish whi-sky, 75 (*ill.*), 76.  
Vat, the Valencia, 68 (*ill.*), 76.  
Ventilating Chamber, ladies accommodated in, 92.  
  
Ventilation, 270-74 (with *ills.*).  
Venner, 467, 483 (*ill.*).  
Verulam, Baron. *See* Bacon, Sir Francis.  
Victoria, Queen, 171, 173, 199, 296, 309 (*ill.*), 459, 460, 361 (*ill.*), 462, 478 (*ill.*), 502 (*ill.*).  
Victoria Tower, the, 232 (*ill.*), 234 (with *ill.*), 235, 236 (*ill.*), 257, 270, 289, 563 (*ill.*).  
Villiers, Charles Pelham, 480.  
Villiers, George. *See* Buckingham, the Duke of.  
Vote Office, the, 366 (*ill.*), 372 (*ill.*), 375 (*ill.*).  
Voyce, Edward, 404.  
Vulhamy, Mr., 279, 280.  
  
Wages of members of Parliament, 13.  
Wales, the Prince of (present—1802), 144.  
Wallace, Sir William, 150.  
Walker, Edmund, 548 (*ill.*), 550.  
Walpole, Horace, 106 (*ill.*), 110, 111, 123, 550, 566, 569, 570.  
Walpole, Lord, 286.  
Walpole, Randolph C., 262.  
Walpole, Sir Robert, 65, 66 (with *ill.*), 98, 100 (with *ill.*), 101 (with *ill.*), 102 (with *ill.*), 103, 104 (with *ill.*), 105, 106, 108, 109, 125 (*ill.*), 223, 250, 208, 416, 533, 550, 568, 569, 570.  
Walter, Mr., 467, 468.  
Wanklyn, Colonel, 385.  
Warbeck, Perkin, 537, 538.  
Wardle, Colonel, 388 (*ill.*).  
Warene, the Earl of, 176.  
Webb, Mr., 567.  
Webster, Daniel, opinion of the Parliament of 1628, 31.  
Wedderburn, 349, 567.  
Wellington, the Duke of, 208, 210 (*ill.*), 214, 292, 449, 460, 462, 463 (with *ill.*), 466, 569 (*ill.*), 572.  
Wentworth, Paul, 22, 23, 32.  
Wentworth, Peter, 21, 22.  
Wentworth, Sir Peter, 46.  
Wentworth, Thomas. *See* Strafford, Earl of.  
Westbury, Lord, 455 (with *ill.*), 456, 457, 458.  
Westley, Mr., 166.  
Westminster Abbey, 4, 14 (*ill.*), 28 (*ill.*), 38 (*ill.*), 113 (*ill.*), 389 (*ill.*), 401 (*ill.*), 555 (*ill.*), 562 (*ill.*).  
Westminster election, a famous, 531: meeting in Westminster Hall, 116.  
Westminster Hall, 3 (*ill.*), 6, 8, 10, 11 (*ill.*), 28 (*ill.*), 74 (*ill.*), 113 (*ill.*), 133-63 (with *ills.*), 182 (*ill.*), 183 (*ill.*), 186 (*ill.*), 189 (*ill.*), 195 (*ill.*), 232, 235, 240, 250, 491 (*ill.*), 560.  
Westminster, the Palace of, 1 *pl.*, 14 (*ill.*), 16, 21 (*ill.*), 38 (*ill.*), 149 (*ill.*), 164, 172 (*ill.*).  
Westminster—*views of:* 128, 134, 136, 555.  
Westmorland, Lady, 90.  
Wharford, the Duke of, 81, 411, 412 (*ill.*).  
Whible, 119.  
Whig and Tory, adoption of the designations, 56.  
  
Whitbread, 92, 130, 393.  
White, Bishop, 154.  
Whitehall, 8, 55 (*ill.*), 561 (*ill.*), 565 (*ill.*), 566.  
Whips, the, 66, 85.  
Whitehurst, Mr., 279.  
Whitelock, Bulstrode, 51 (*ill.*), 411.  
Whitman, 276.  
Whittington, Lord, 155.  
Willerforce, Archdeacon, 142, 405 (with *ill.*).  
Willerforce, Bishop Samuel, 457, 458.  
Willerforce, William, FRONTISPIECE, 69, 211 (*ill.*), 227, 352.  
Wild, Jonathan, 443.  
Wilkes, John, 118, 119, 120 (*ill.*), 121, 196, 417, 528.  
William I., 4, 173.  
William II., 6, 133 (with *ill.*), 136, 173.  
William III., 54 (*ill.*), 55 (*ill.*), 276, 321, 346, 438, 410.  
William IV., 173, 199, 308 (*ill.*), 325, 453, 459.  
William of Wykeham, 318 (*ill.*), 423.  
Williams, John (Bishop of Lincoln and Archbishop of York), 422 (with *ill.*), 424, 428.  
Winnington, the Earl of, 370, 570.  
Winchester, the Marquis of, 300, 302, 314.  
Windham, 161, 226.  
Wine-cellers at the House of Commons, 67 (*ill.*).  
Wine charges at the House, 74, 76.  
Winter, Thomas, 265 (*ill.*), 296, 269.  
Witenagmot, the, 9.  
Wolf, Sir Henry Drummond, 512.  
Wolsey, Cardinal, 17, 18 (*ill.*), 19 (*ill.*), 303 (*ill.*), 329 (*ill.*), 332, 334, 423, 545.  
  
Women sit in Parliament, 10.  
Wood, Charles, 216.  
Wood, Sir William Page. *See* Hatherley, Baron.  
Woodfall, William, 123, 224 (*ill.*), 225.  
Woolack, the, 456 (*ill.*).  
Worcester, the Earl of, 302, 304.  
Wray, Sir Cecil, 541, 542.  
Wray, Sir Christopher, 331 (*ill.*) 397.  
Wren, Sir Christopher, 250, 276, 294, 563, 566.  
Wright, Francis, 226.  
Wright, John, 265 (*ill.*), 266.  
Wright, Mrs., 166.  
Wright, Sir Nathan, 440.  
Wyatt, Sir Thomas, 152.  
Wynbush, Mr., 12.  
Wyndham, George, 530, 532 (with *ill.*), 534.  
  
Yarmouth, the Earl of, 204.  
Yelverton, Sergeant, 323, 398.  
Yeoman of the Guard, a COLOURED PLATE facing p. 263, 314 (*ill.*).  
Yevell, Henry, 135.  
Yonge, Sir William, 223.  
York, the Duke of, 330, 428, 430, 432.  
York House, 425 (*ill.*).  
Yorke, Sir Philip, 102.  
  
Zenelly. *See* Yevell.



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